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THE BEST POEMS OF 1938



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The
BEST POEMS
of 1938



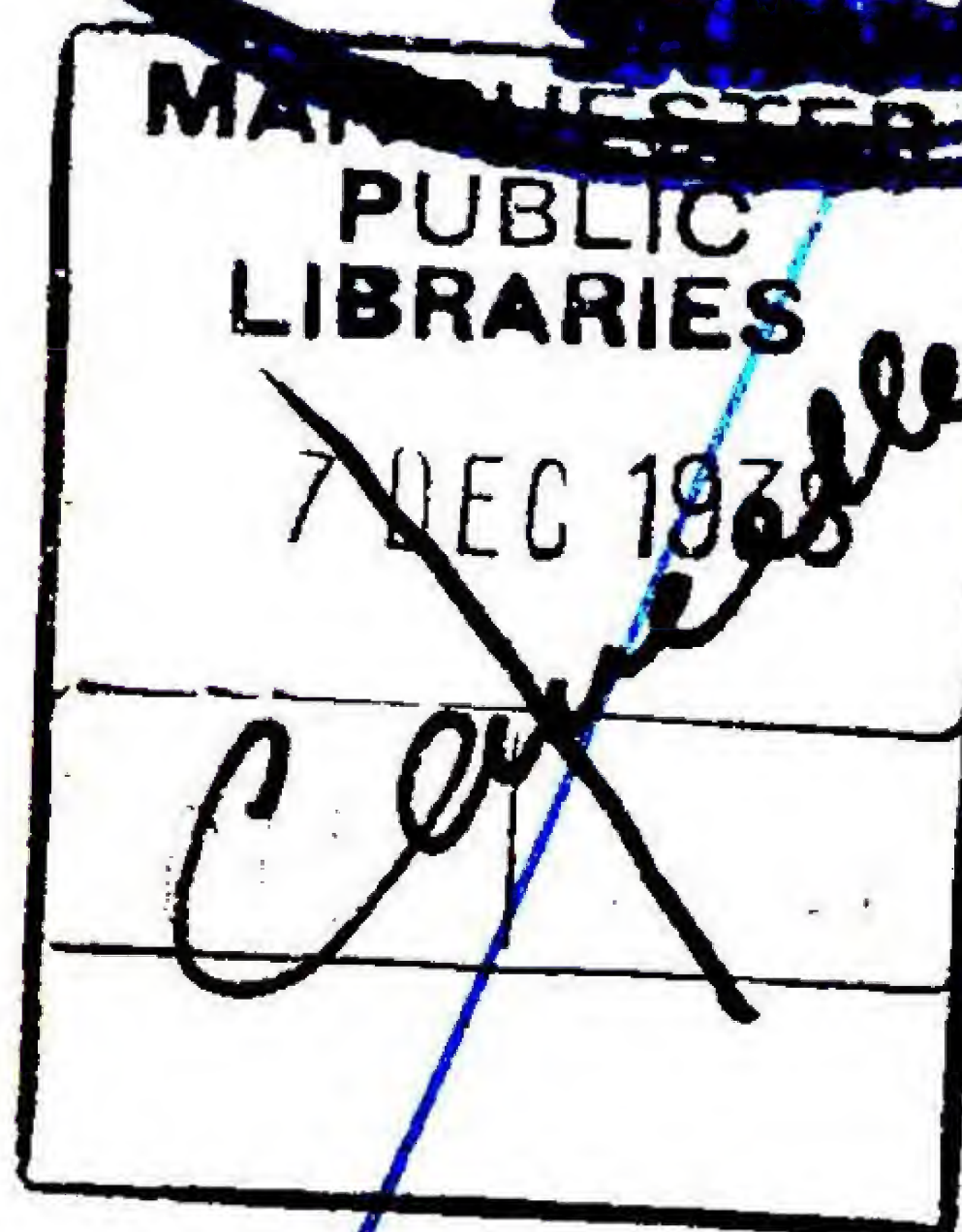
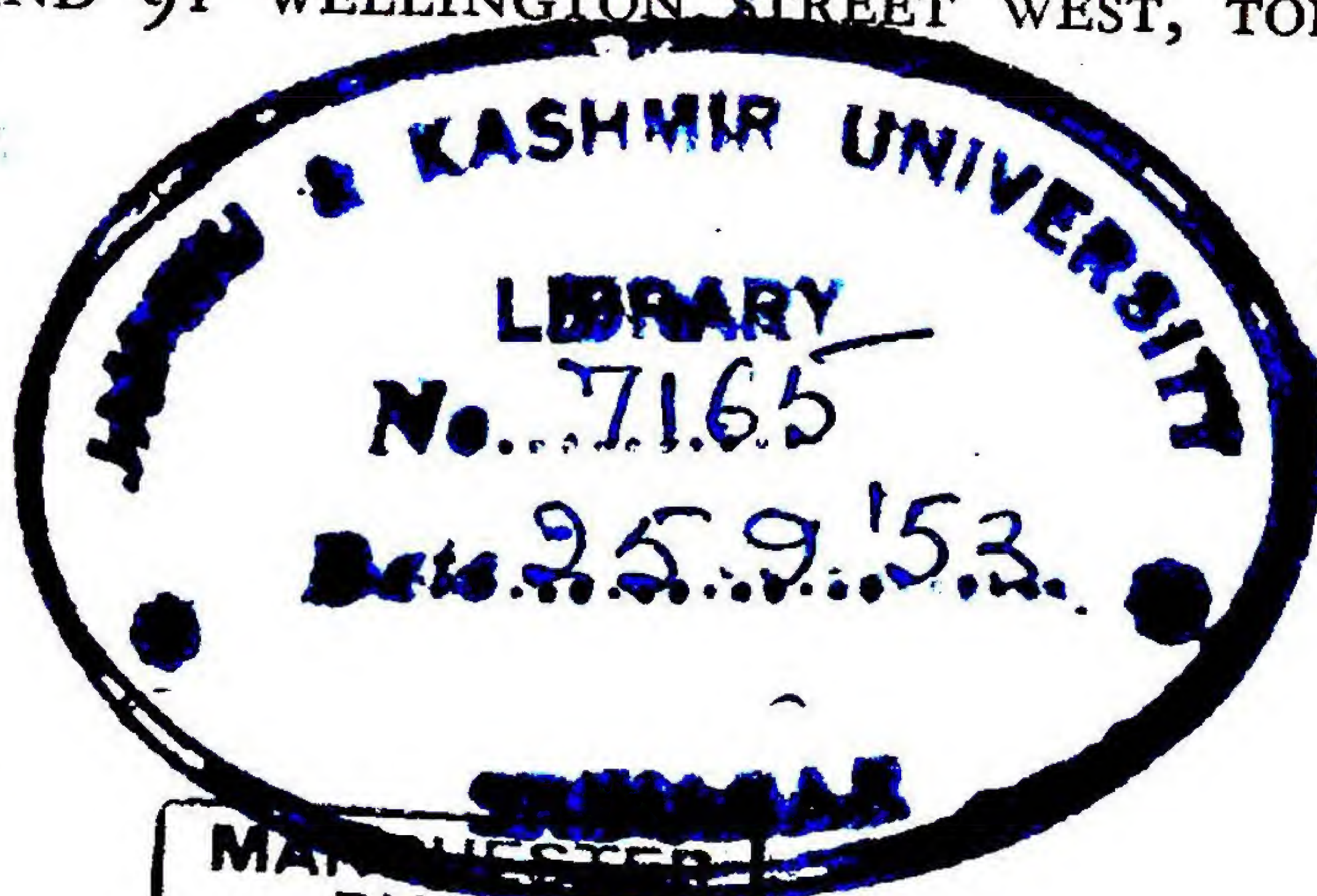
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THOMAS MOULT
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Introduction

TO understand the position of poetry as this seventeenth annual issue of the *Best Poems* series of compilations from the British and American periodicals is published we must go back to the time, not so very long ago, when the tribal bard sang his songs of love and hate to a group of listeners and inspired them to do daring deeds: when the message was composed of words and exclamations that sounded all the more moving because they were spoken or chanted in a way that allowed no misrepresentation through the obscurity that later on was too often lauded as subtlety.

Primitive song, primitive poetry, was a big influence in the life of the community. Nor, as time went on, did that influence decline. Court minstrels revived the departed glories of war in a world at peace. They also expressed the longing for peace in a world at war. The old ballad-monger became a familiar figure in town and village, the actor declaiming heroic couplets was ubiquitous in the drama. Again the appeal was a direct one, not yet was the recital too 'profound'—another term for obscurity; the common folk responded as to-day they respond to the topical news in pictures.

Nay, the response was more emphatic, far less fleeting. The history of poetry contains instances of a poem having stirred the multitudes as deeply as, say, they were stirred by this or that prose-work—in the nineteenth century especially. Walter Scott, Thomas Hood, Tennyson, to name only three in the same century—there were moments when these names and certain writings associated with them became household topics. The verses that used to be hawked in the streets of London may have been doggerel, but it never occurred to anyone in those days to bemoan that people knew nothing about poetry.

But the admission is being made to-day, and the reason sought. Many are the attempts to give an answer, and the usual charge against modern poetry is that the people no longer lend to it what Mr. Herbert Palmer, in his recent study of *Post-Victorian Poetry*, has called 'the listening ear,' simply because there would be nothing for them to hear with understanding if they listened! In other words the average poet is said to be out of touch with the market-place: he writes of scenes less homely, less human than the fireside clime. What is essential in poetry, now as ever, declares Mr. Palmer, is that 'it should be sensuous and impassioned, that it should make experience completely alive, that it should be capable of giving pleasure to a listening ear.'

In preparing *The Best Poems of 1934* the compiler has kept in mind this very reasonable stipulation, particularly that about making experience completely alive. And the principle on which the selection is made has consequently remained unchanged. Poetry became a cult of the study when, primarily, it needed thinking about in greater proportion than it was felt, and if the people are to be persuaded to turn back to it, the poet also must keep something in mind. Only in this way will poetry be divested of all that in recent times has made so much of it vague and aloof among the priceless treasures of our heritage. The following pages, therefore, are intended to serve a dual purpose—to persuade and to emphasise. They have been reproduced from the periodicals (as distinct from books) of a year which, for the present purposes, began in July 1937 and ended in June 1938. The co-operation as helpers in especial ways of the compiler's wife and his friends, R. J. Minney, Esq., and the author of *Post-Victorian Poetry*, is gratefully acknowledged. And cordial thanks are again given to the poets, editors, and publishers without whose help the volume could not have been made.

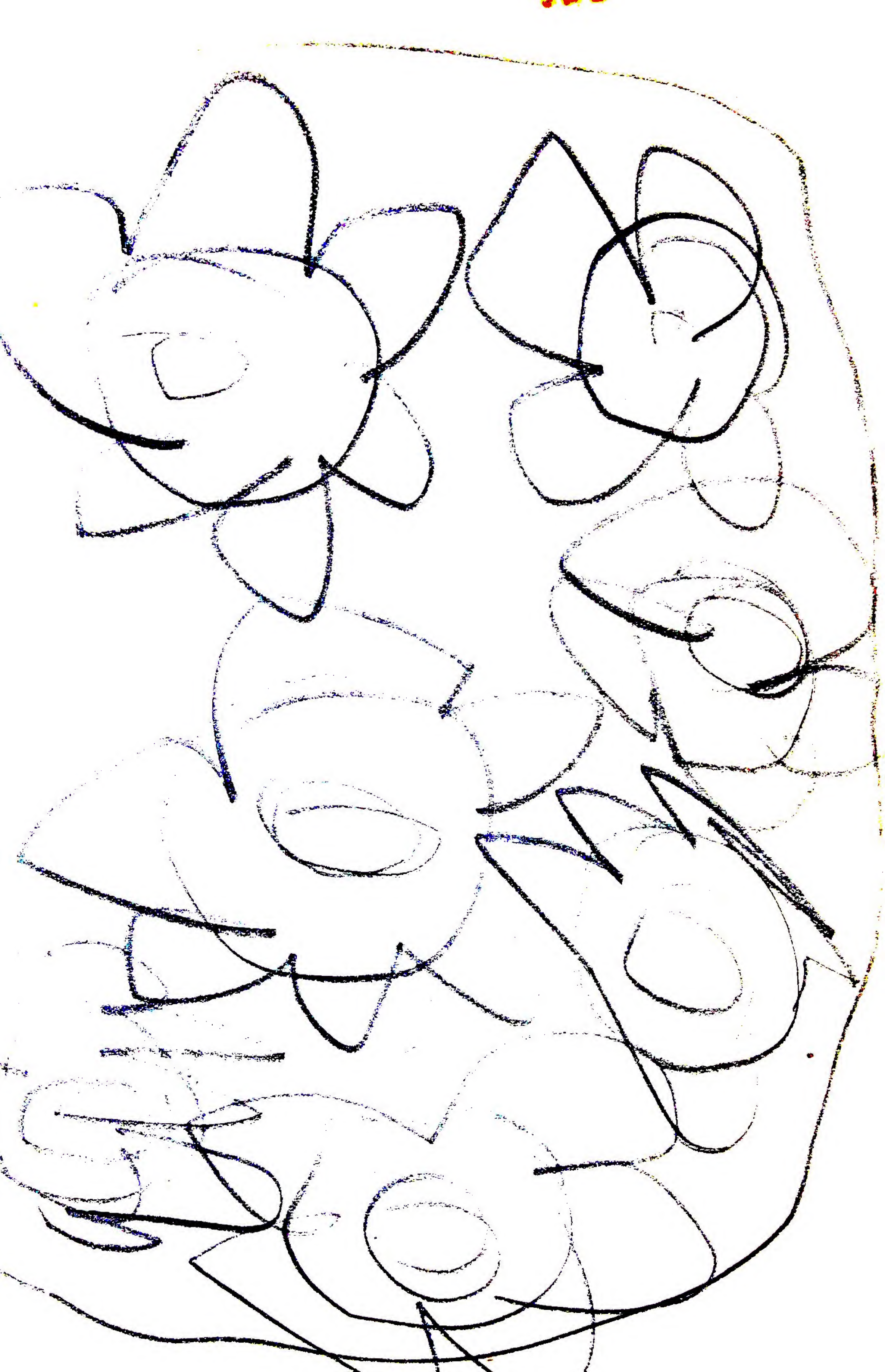
THOMAS MOULT.

To
THE MEMORY
of
SIR HENRY NEWBOLT
E. V. LUCAS
JULIAN BELL
JOHN V. A. WEAVER
J. G. SIGMUND



THE BEST POEMS OF 1938





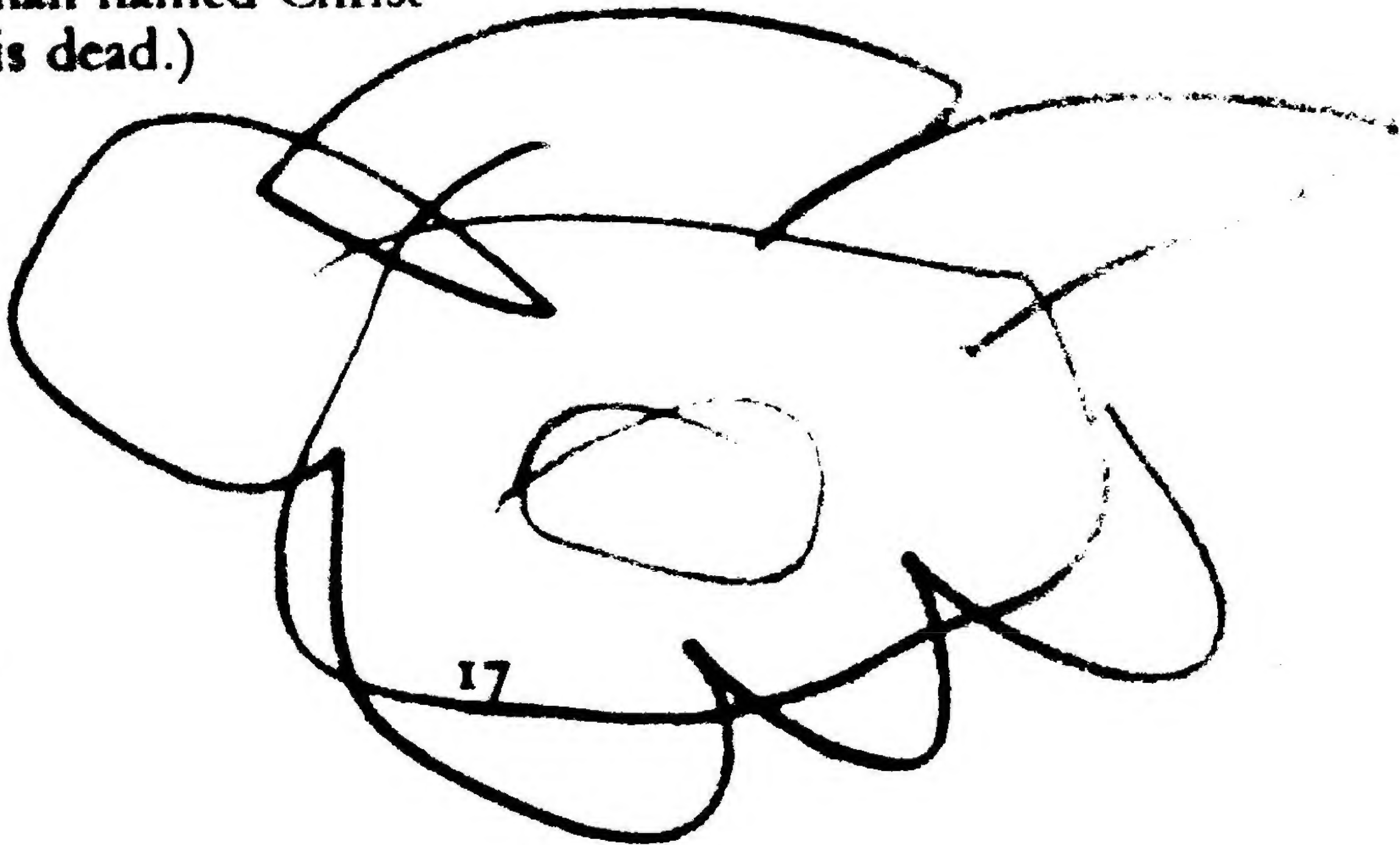
JOHN RUSSELL McCARTHY

MEMORIES

YOU remember, Big Tree, the year of the
hurricane —
in smoothed limb-stubs you remember it.
(The books remember it too
in a man named Washington
who is dead.)

You remember, Big Tree, the year of the changing
sun-spots
and the shattering spears of fire —
in your split triumphant head you remember it.
(The books remember it too
in a man named Columbus
who is dead.)

You remember, Big Tree, the year of the bellowing
fire
when you were young —
in your hidden bold black heart you remember it.
(The books remember it too
in a man named Christ
who is dead.)



A. S. J. TESSIMOND

THE TOO-MUCH-LOVED

IT has been written in your star
That fires shall kindle where you are:
That where you walk there shall be strife;
Ice melting; earth turned; sleep stirred; life.

You will graze hearts and blood will spurt.
You will be hurt because you hurt
Those whom you try not even to touch,
Whose eyes pursue your eyes too much.

You will write larger than you know
Upon the sky, and where you go
There will be wounds and pain, which yet
None of the wounded will regret.

You will bring peace, but oftener still
Wars in your name, against your will;
Yet you, divider, waker of
Angers, will suffer too much love.

And you will stir the whirlpool up,
And you will drink the unasked-for cup,
And be of those much-damned-and-blessed
Who never rest, who never rest.

JAMES E. WARREN

FINAL LIGHTNING

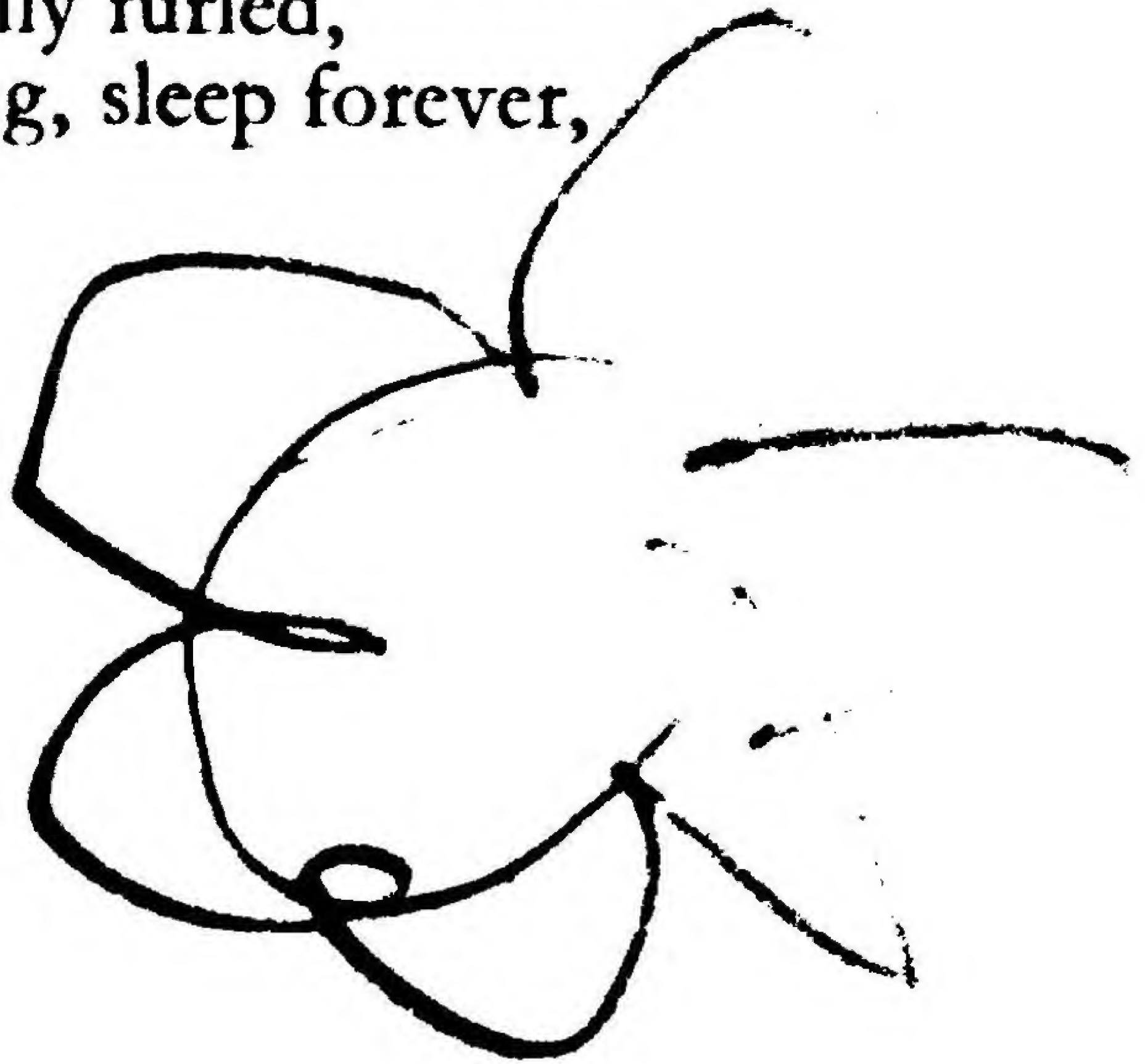
SOON will the lovely cornice suddenly crumble
Like shattered sand into the quaking street,
And jagged glass across the bloody pavement
Gleam with the fiery sleet.

Soon will the bronze-limbed boys in white forsake
The quiet courts and sun and speeding ball,
To run through muddy fields, to throw hands sky-
ward,
To clutch – no thing at all.

Soon will the willows, mirrored in park waters,
Stifle in ebony smoke and saffron gas,
No more to taste the drowsiness of August,
Or hear the Aprils pass.

Soon, we who dream must terribly awaken
In gentle places, where the thunder comes,
Our laughing eyes be torches of cold anger,
Our hearts be foolish drums.

And soon shall we, who feared no final lightning,
Lie with our battle-flags of folly furled,
And, with our fingers touching, sleep forever,
Unworthy of the world.



SHEILA WINGFIELD

THE DEAD

I

THE dead are shades indeed, they never lived;

For how can we believe they did exist,
Once they are taken off the world's edge by
The wind that blew the plumes astray
And bore the trumpet noise away? —
The wind that has their face deprived
Of light, and thinned them to so fine a mist
That, harried in a ghostly drove,
They run from us perpetually.
Perhaps this wind from barrack square
Or from a limbo tenement
But bids us, as immortals, each prepare
To shiver in a leafless grove;
A jealous wind, that will steal half
Of the hot meadow's reaper-clack
Which is all summer, or the night-stock's scent,
Or, on the road, a friend's laugh,
And pleases to hurl back
Among the tiles and smoke an urchin's shout;
That makes the sobbing wavelets curl,
While not an ashen leaf escapes
The impress of its hurrying seal
Which can our tongues like pennons furl
Or turn a sleeper's thoughts to untrue shapes;
A stubborn wind, that thickens till you feel
The banging door, and memory's shut out.

II

The quiet dead,
 Who were decoyed by a false tale
 Of murmurings on Lethe's pebbly bed,
 Have cast from them as childishness our joy
 In all the live and woken things which now
 May be their foolish, constant dreams,
 And are aloof from how
 We long to peer behind the murk
 And pantomime of bony jowl
 And yew and headstone, to unveil
 Their voices or their children's screams,
 Or how they whistled at their work;
 For tautly as you dare to strain
 In listening, you only hear again
 Hector to Aias calling like an owl,
 At night, across the wasted plain of Troy.

III

In spite of this we strive
 With vigour, when alive,
 For earthen perpetuity;
 In spite of the great bones that lie
 In hills green-lidded from the light;
 In spite of that Imperial road
 Where warriors stand in their huge stone
 And wildflowers blow about their feet; in spite
 Of nothing being colder than the rain
 On knees of monuments, or mute as fame
 From trumpets with the angel gilt;
 Though manifold can be a name



As is the wind's print on the seas
And yet will fade in libraries,
Or few as those in thymy air
Found carved on a Pentelic chair,
Though this one is as neat
As a lark's shadow, this one grown
To a forbidding, dark domain;
Though we as children left the teat
And then, as men, from folly strode —
Yet do we want our tower built,
On the great Macedonian's marching dust,
Each step, each breath, with aching thrust.



STRUTHERS BURT

THE BLOODY MEN

CALL the great roll of stars that ride the sky
When the brave quiet October nights come by,
And like the breath of horses, on the hill
The first frost rises vaporous and still.

.
Now all forgot shrill summer and the moon,
The locusts' crying, and the crying loon,
Red waters where transparent wings harass
The double-shadowed bats that pass . . . repass;
Now every tree is silent, and the grass.

And in the afternoons the level light
Spreads out along the forest, swathed and bright,
Save where the firs are dark, but even there
With misty gold they spire the upper air;
The weeds are gold, the gold is everywhere.

Blood in October is a smeared insult
Staining the shouting little men of words;
The cowards, and the braggarts, and the cult;
The marching fists, the crowded flags, the swords;
Blood in October when the hills are red
Mocks the loud living with the quiet dead.

.
The night comes down; beyond the nearer gate
You hear the sound of horses, sharp and late.
You leave the warmth; you leave the ruddy
 hearth;
You shut the door; you smell the frosty earth;

You raise your head . . . the far, unclamorous
throng
Is silence greater than the end of song.
These are the names that make men strong.

And one who watches all alone
Recaptures once again his own;
And one who watches from a tower
Feels dignity again and power;
And one who is beset by men
Looks up, and then looks up again.

Through all the ages and the hidden years
The stars have quieted men's fears.

Arab, and Jew, and Goth, and Finn,
The night and stars have made them kin.

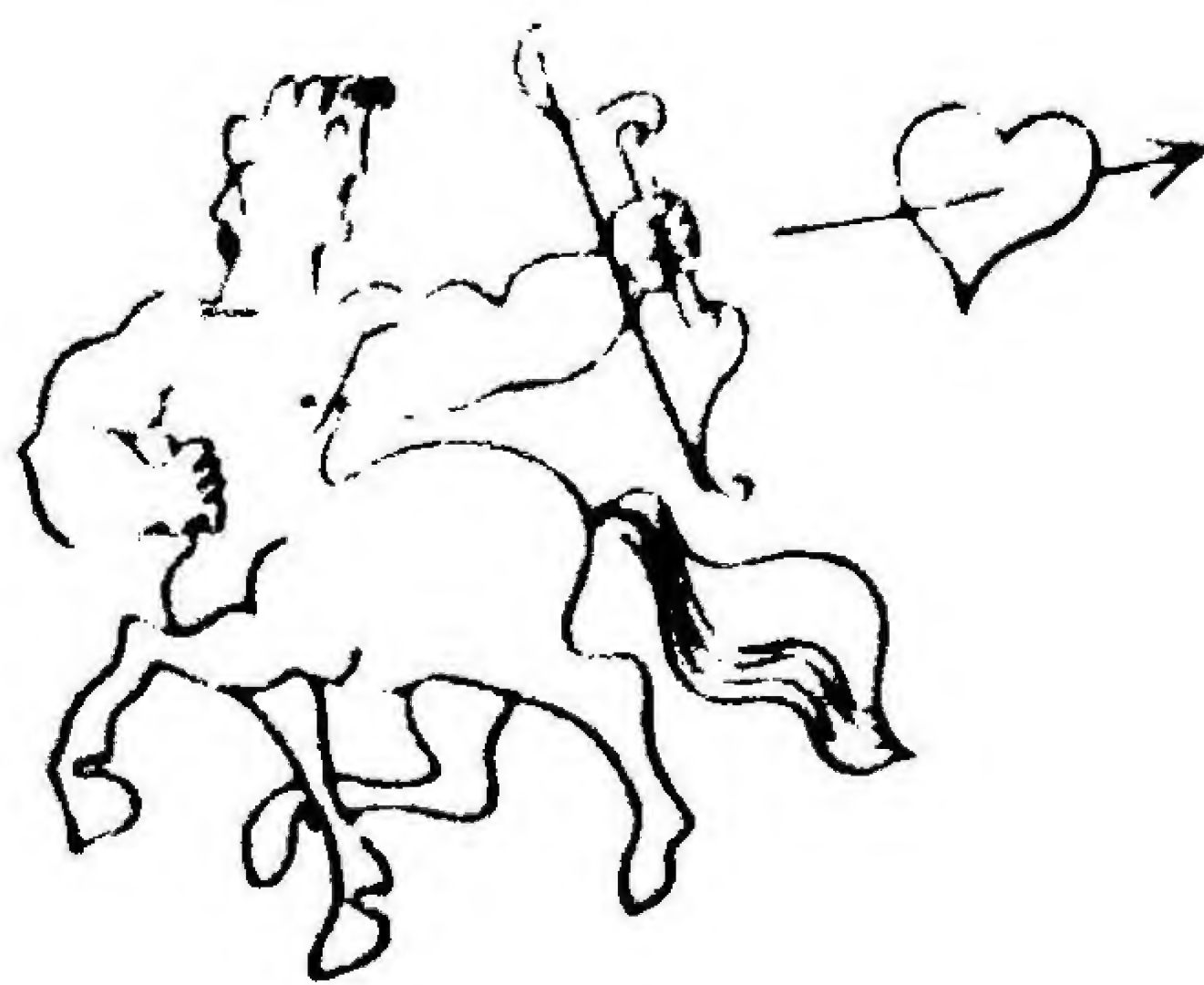
For now Capella's rising crest
Faces Arcturus in the west,
And Spica, lover of the sun,
Beyond the further rim has run,
And red Antares slowly sets
Above the high-hills' minarets.

Altair and Vega, Formalhaut,
The star-prowed mighty galleons go,
The Swan, The Wain, The Hyades,
The Archer and The Pleiades;
The Hunting Dogs; the frosty Crown;
The Eagle and The Scorpion.
Andromeda; the scattered fire
Of Hercules; the delicate Lyre.

**Auriga, Pegasus, The Bull;
Orion, the large, the masterful;
Aldebaran and Betelgeuse.
Mizar, Merak, Deneb, Alcaid,
They rise again. . . . It has been said!**

**It has been said that they will rise
Night after night and cross the skies.
And shepherds named them waiting news
Of something wonderful and glad,
Yet year by year, each night the wonder
Was there above, around, and under,
Strong as the wind, as strong as thunder
And straight and bright as arrowy rain
Was the bright surety made plain.**

**Look up, you small and bloody men,
Polaris points the sky again!**



DOROTHY COOPER

THE BRIDGE

THE afternoon stands longer on a bridge
To look into the river with her one
Magnificence that is abstracted sun.
She stands and breathes enchantment all around.

You could almost lie down upon this air
So visible with motes and smoke and steam.
Fancy a hammock swinging from this beam
And you reclining with no need to dream!

The last postponement breaks against the night.
The afternoon gives up the ghost to seep
Into the water, into the distant deep
Unfathomable abyss where all things sleep

That are begotten on the sun's body.
Now the spires, weary of being definite,
Now the church steeple solidly granite,
And the bridge girders: all bathe in it,
This ever-thickening, vague-descending dark.
Yet see her standing as a phantom there
In the thick midst of night, remember her
Who made the bridge a permanence of air.

GRANVILLE PAUL SMITH

ONE GENERATION TO ANOTHER

SHALL we pass on to you a perfect world,
You who come after? Would you have the stain
Sponged out and all the bloody standards furled,
With conflict closed for ever? What is gain
If loss be cancelled and its hazard sheathed?
No testament of peace is ours, but this:
The exquisite uncertainty bequeathed
To quickened flesh, alive to smite or kiss.
Yes, we have failed, as you yourselves will fail,
As hosts have failed, before we yet awoke
From nerveless sleep to strive without avail
And weep to see Utopia's ruins smoke.
Reproach us not, who leave you moth and rust,
And shining visions in a cloud of dust.



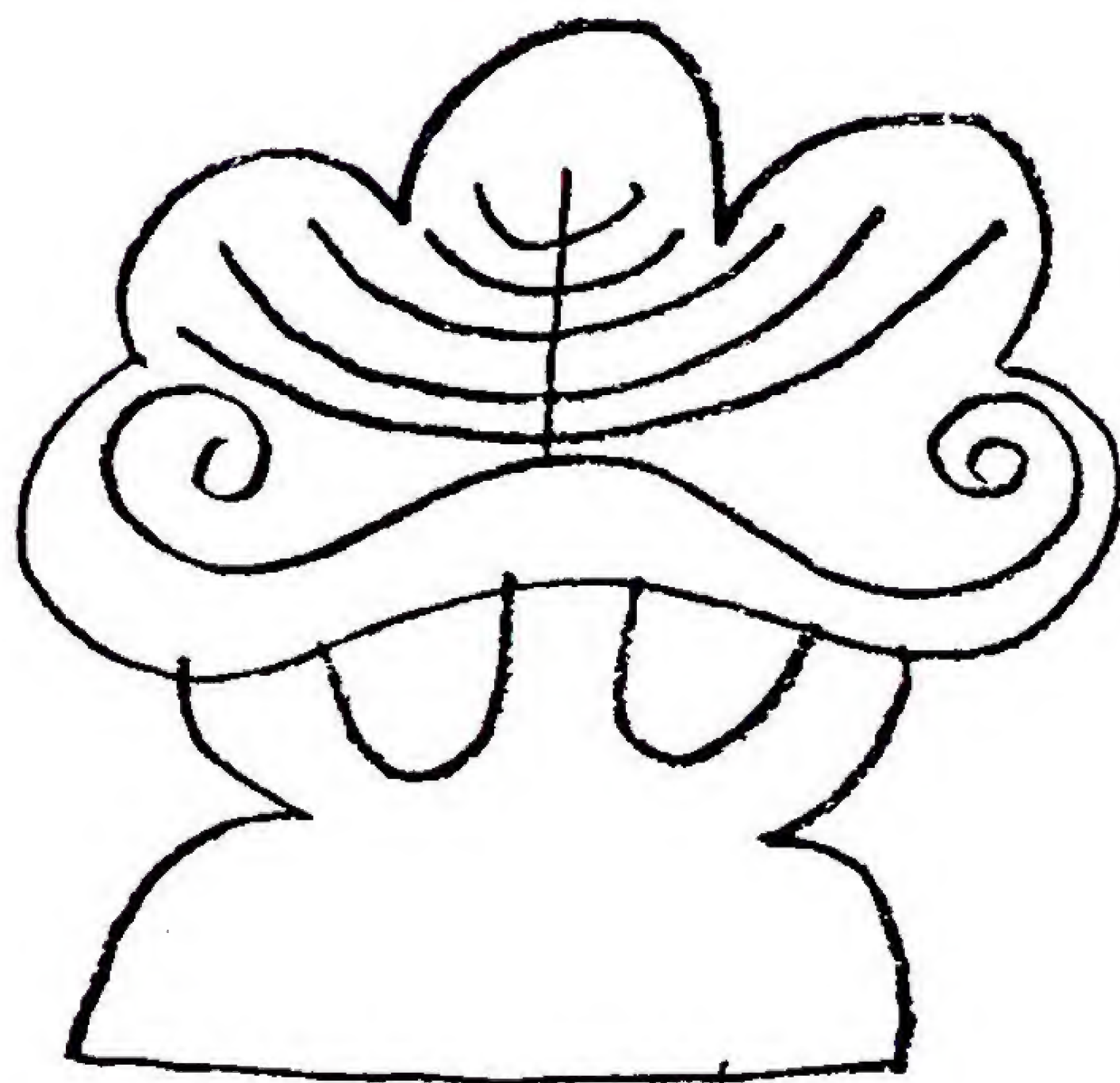
WILLIAM SOUTAR

THE IRON TREE

MEN who go forth in feud,
When the blind bugles bray,
Shall root an iron tree
Within their brothers' blood:

A tree to multiply
Its branches everywhere
With blooms which rot the air
And boughs which hide the sky:

And children round the root,
When the warriors are bone,
Shall sing of unison
And pluck the poisonous fruit.



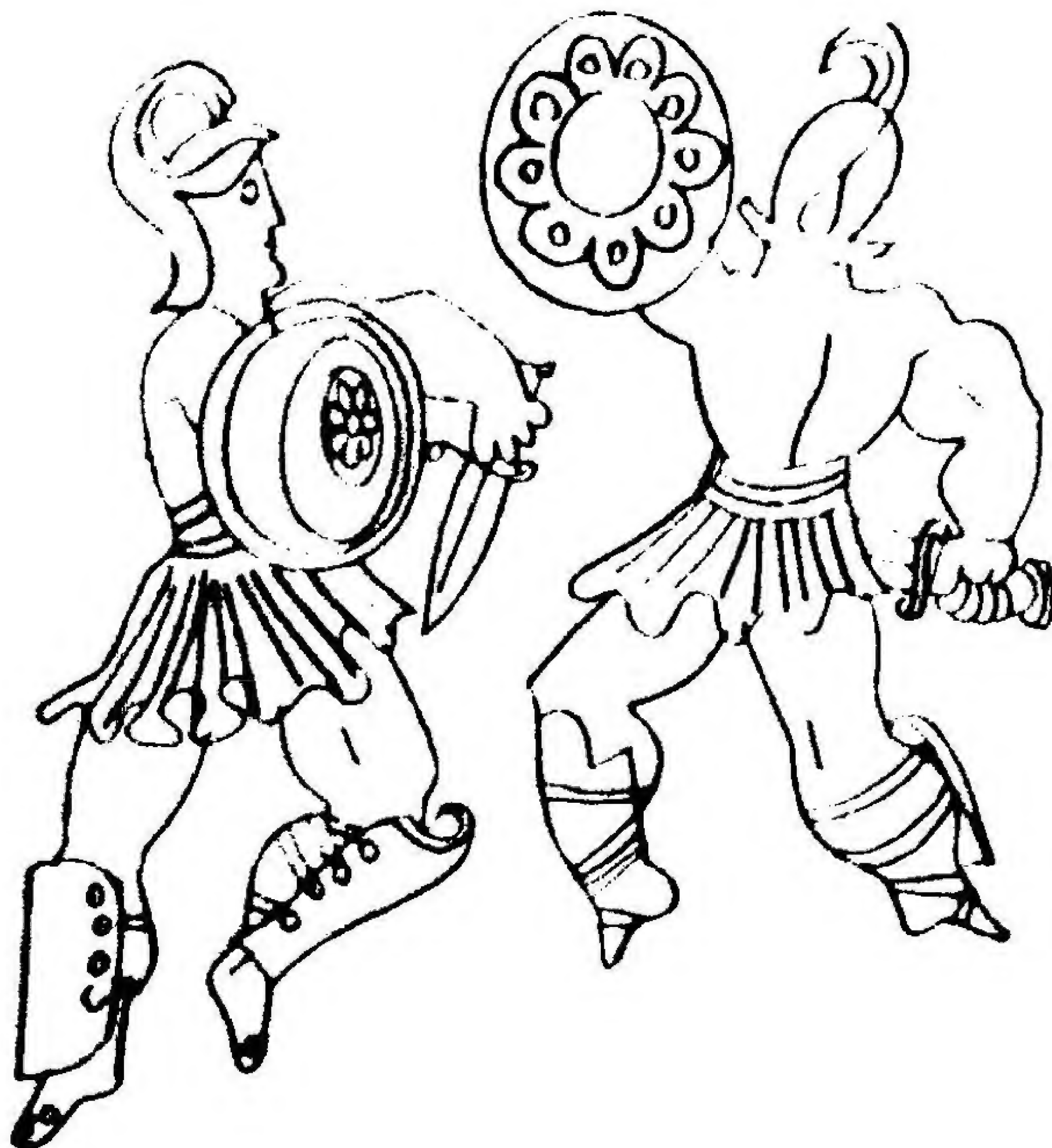
W. H. DAVIES

ARMED FOR WAR

IS life on Earth a viler thing
Than ever was known before?
Who shall we ask — the wise old man
Whose years have reached five score?

When we have questioned Church and State,
Is there any one else to ask?
Is it the Baby, three weeks old,
That wears a gas-proof mask?

Is it the Infant armed to meet
A poisoned earth and sky —
A thing too weak to lift its hand
To rub a sleepy eye?



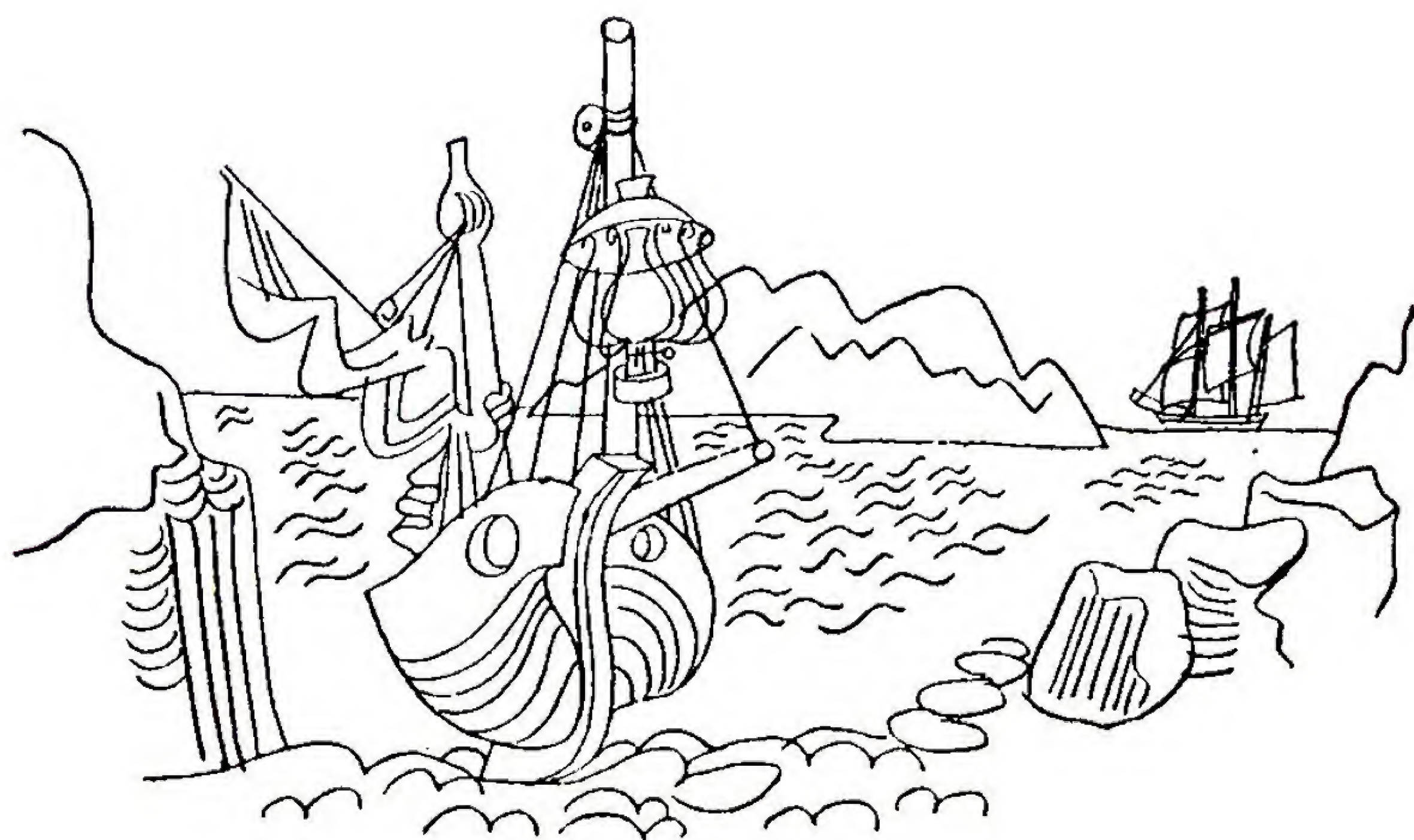
CHARLES MALAM

BETWEEN US AND THE SHORE

BETWEEN us and the shore
A fisherman rows home against the sun,
His casting ended and his day's catch won,
The rhythm of his oar,
The stride of woodsmen compassed to their mark,
The swing of ploughman going home at dark.

Low in the west
The golden day full circle brings its span;
The hills, the wooded lake, the weary man
Consider rest;
Now the grey swallows dip and darting fly
Hunting the moth along the deepening sky.

Loose out the lines and take the net once more.
What lies between us and the shadowed shore
Has its own time, and may leap quick and clear,
A shining wonder, to forgotten bait
When we have left our casting and but wait,
Long years from now, and far away from here.



MARYA ZATURENSKA

IN SONG, THE COUNTERSIGN

(*In Memoriam*: D. H. Lawrence)

A GAIN that voice intangible as running light
On half-awakened tree in early March,
That voice forgotten, heard reluctantly
In dreams that fear the sun, and waking flee.

The songs of sirens are not half so sweet,
So fraught with secret danger, so beguiling:
Where shall we run? where is that warm retreat?
Where can we stop our eyes and calm our minds?
O singing cease! nor draw our unwilling feet
Through the fleet wilderness, dryshod on the wild
sea.

No, let us drown in music and resign
Our hearts, our souls, our loves to the wide waters,
Following the song that leaves the strong will weak,
The forgotten hope, the disastrous dream to seek
The lost music, life's rich countersign.

Now come the maidens to the water's edge
And throw their wreaths away, they wade in star-
light;
Now the young men follow, eager and swift,
Lifting their voices through the dew-damp sedge,
And through the heavy woods, the embowered
night

One voice, one melody, sweet, drowned and faint
Is cool in summer's heat, in darkness bright.

So are our vanquished bodies cast ashore
And empty are our eyes, empty our arms,
And the sharp raptures in our hearts no more.
Our little deaths are swallowed by the sun;
Our aspirations, longings and alarms
Are drawn into sleep's vast felicity:
Oh, not love's martyrs, or life's victims we.

Recorders on bleak stone, symbols of vaster dreams,
Lovers of love, expounders of the blood
Who breathed and floundered in the living flood
Of fire-drawn liquid air, of flowing light.
The perilous mountains lured us through the night
And the remote white voices far away
Until the day seemed night, the night seemed day.
We sink, we drown, in bottomless lost streams.



GLENN WARD DRESBACH

GARDEN LEFT ALONE

NOW in some fairer land she may forget
This hillside garden, stubborn with its rocks,
Where first she started rose and mignonette,
The larkspur and the sturdy hollyhocks.
Now only order changes while they win
Through weeds and clover to the bloom she knew
Above the soil the years had weathered thin. . . .
Where she had stood with beauty in the dew.

The early autumn wind will sow once more
The seeds her weary hands had planted here.
She started beauty though a boarded door
Has faced the garden many a lonely year.
A garden left alone will keep its way
Of smiling up to some one, day by day.

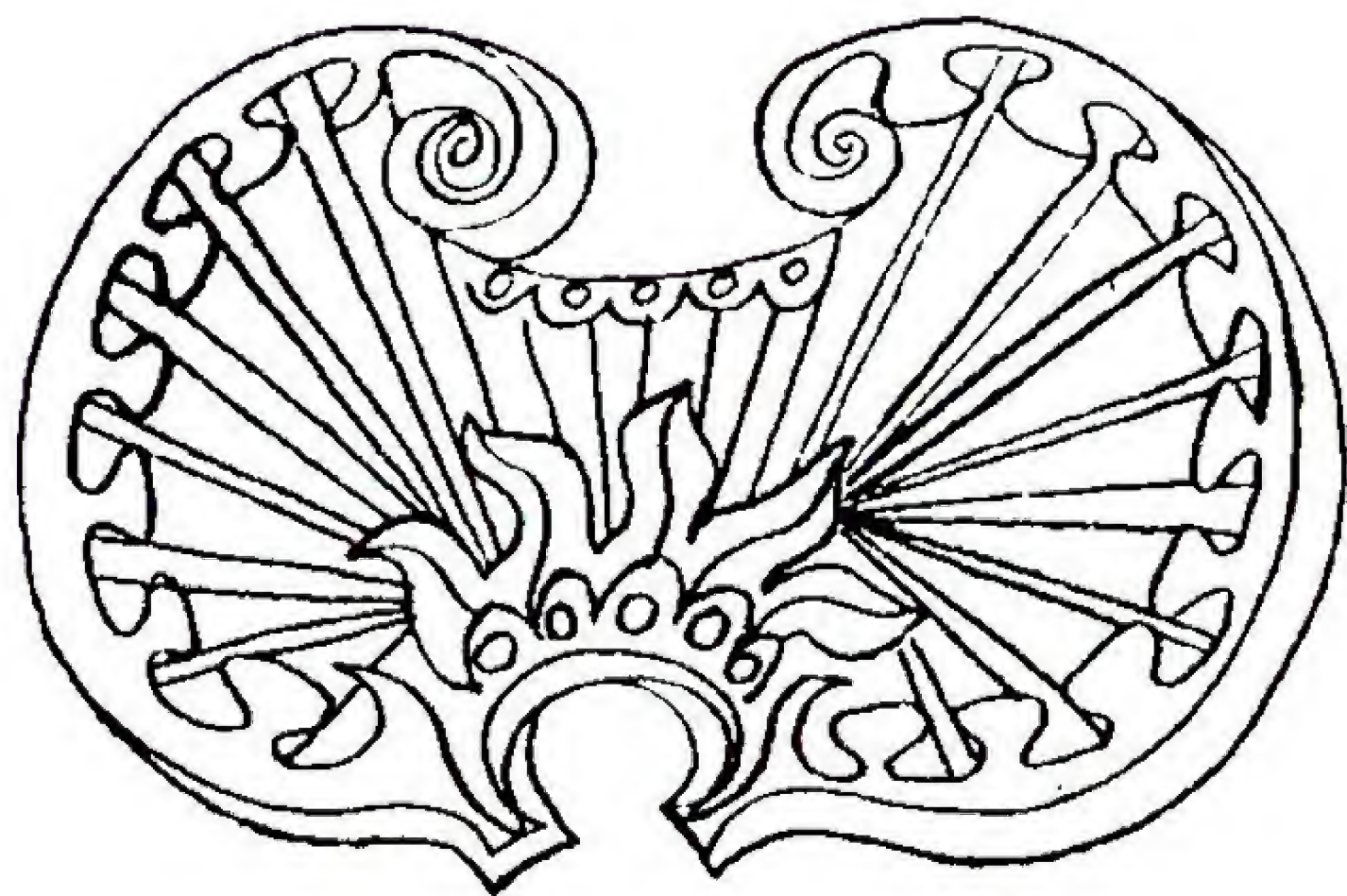


JOSEPHINE JOHNSON

SONNET IN BITTERNESS

LET the dark power strike! I shall not care—
I give my body gladly to the dust,
And if my spirit scatter on the air—
So be it! Air holds stranger things in trust.
Tell me of none who mark the sparrow's fall—
What use to mark, and lift no hand to stay?
'Thy hairs are numbered.' Numbered, that is all—
The children starve by thousands every day!

Only the earth is faithful, kind and true—
However the storms of heaven beat down upon her
She brings her increase forth in season due,
And gives to man, the spent and desperate runner,
All that he knows of beauty, peace and grace,
His one sure joy, his certain resting-place!



ELEANOR A. CHAFFEE

OLD MAN

WE were in a room:
But when he talked
The walls fell down,
And grey shapes stalked.
The clock's hands stopped,
The moon stared down,
Silvering locks
Of his hoary crown.
Space, spread out
Like a rubber band,
Obeyed the pressure
Of his hand.
None remembers
The tale he told:
But they still can feel
The wind blow cold
On face and forehead;
And they can hear
The whispered cry
Of a nameless fear.



DANIEL W. SMYTHE

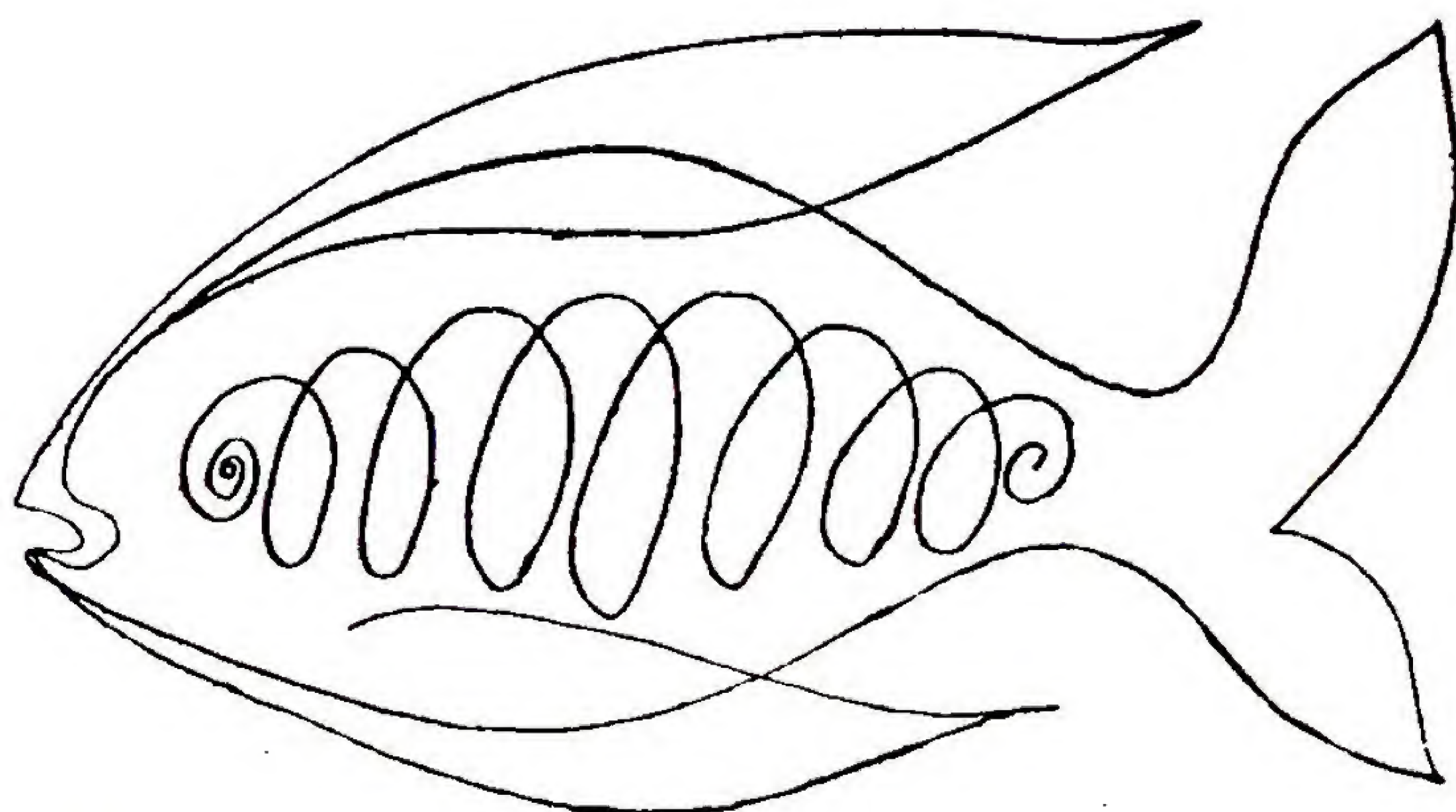
CITY STREET

INTO the turmoil flooding the valley of stone,
You have departed. Torrential faces are swirled
Against the dusty air; and I stand alone,
Breasting the rush of the unheeding world.

Out of the deeps they come, through the cold
street,
With no words for me, no friendly glance: they
move
Into their destinies with hurrying feet.
I turn, bewildered by the fact they prove.

And you, given over to these, lost in the crowd?
It cannot be! And yet the sickened mind
Remembers misunderstanding, our heads bowed,
The turning away, and doors closing behind.

I dare to wait, but you will not return
From these swift waves that break along the street.
Knowing that you are drowned for ever, I yearn
For your warmth again, your light, your glad
heartbeat.



EDWARD AMES RICHARDS

POEMS ON THE WAR

I

Dinner Party

THE war is swallowed with the steak and fish.
The blood is flavoured with madame's bouquet.
These well-fed people have a well-fed way
Of eating what calamity they wish:
That is a thigh-bone in the silver dish,
This is a hand with fingers cured away,
Try some of this breast, fresh-killed but yesterday.
And hear wine gurgle and the taffeta swish.
Fill you and gird for most delicious war
And swell your veins with the most glorious dead
Born and unborn, now before the start:
Bite what your appetite is reaching for.
Be not amazed when horror twirls your head
Nor when the poisoned year has burst your heart.

II

At Last Civilised

And when the poisoned year has burst your heart
Then proudly recollect how all the graces
Bedecked your carcase, how of all proud races
Yours the proudest, and no height of art,
No depth of knowing, hidden from the dart
Of your tight-strung mind. You searched out all
the places
Where men could live with light upon their faces
And marked how soft, how simply blown apart.

For all your bursted heart, what epic wit!
To know the whole world yours, but for the taking;
To see the whole race whole, but for the blasting—
None of the centuries can equal it—
The golden centuries you praise by breaking,
The golden times you prove not everlasting.



EDWARD THOMPSON

BROKEN SILENCE

FRRIEND, who spake his name?
That name for many a day
I had not heard!
Going my listless way
Unpanged, unstirred,
Almost I had forgot
The sleeping air
Nourished a fire so hot —
Almost was unaware
My own heart's secret lair
Hid close so fierce a pain,
That died to spring again!
Strange that a spoken word
Should kill the years' long peace!
Light syllables that fell
And vanished with their birth,
Light-riding keels that scarce
Furrowed the silent air!

Heart! when the citadel
Drowsed, and the sentinel
Dallied with idle dreams,
No voice or tread I caught
Of foes that filled the plain —
Of sleep was all my thought!
I am shut round, it seems!
Who fired that random shot
Whereby the night became
(Night that was drugged with dreams)
Thunder and sheeted flame?

Who was it spake that Name?

ELIZABETH CROSS

CHILDHOOD'S SUMMER

LET us remember the time when morning began
Long before breakfast; when out we ran
Into the welcoming garden, leaving the hush
Of the sleeping house, and heard the thrush
On his own, his traditional, lilac bough —
Telling the world to be happy, now, now, now!

Let us remember the time when the lawns were
mown

And we carried the baskets of grass to be thrown
On the smother fire. Then 'Off with his head!'
To the daisies, the lawn mower said.
The whole day was patterned with stripes of green
And the scent of grass drying, sweet and clean.

Let us remember the evenings, so light and so
strange;

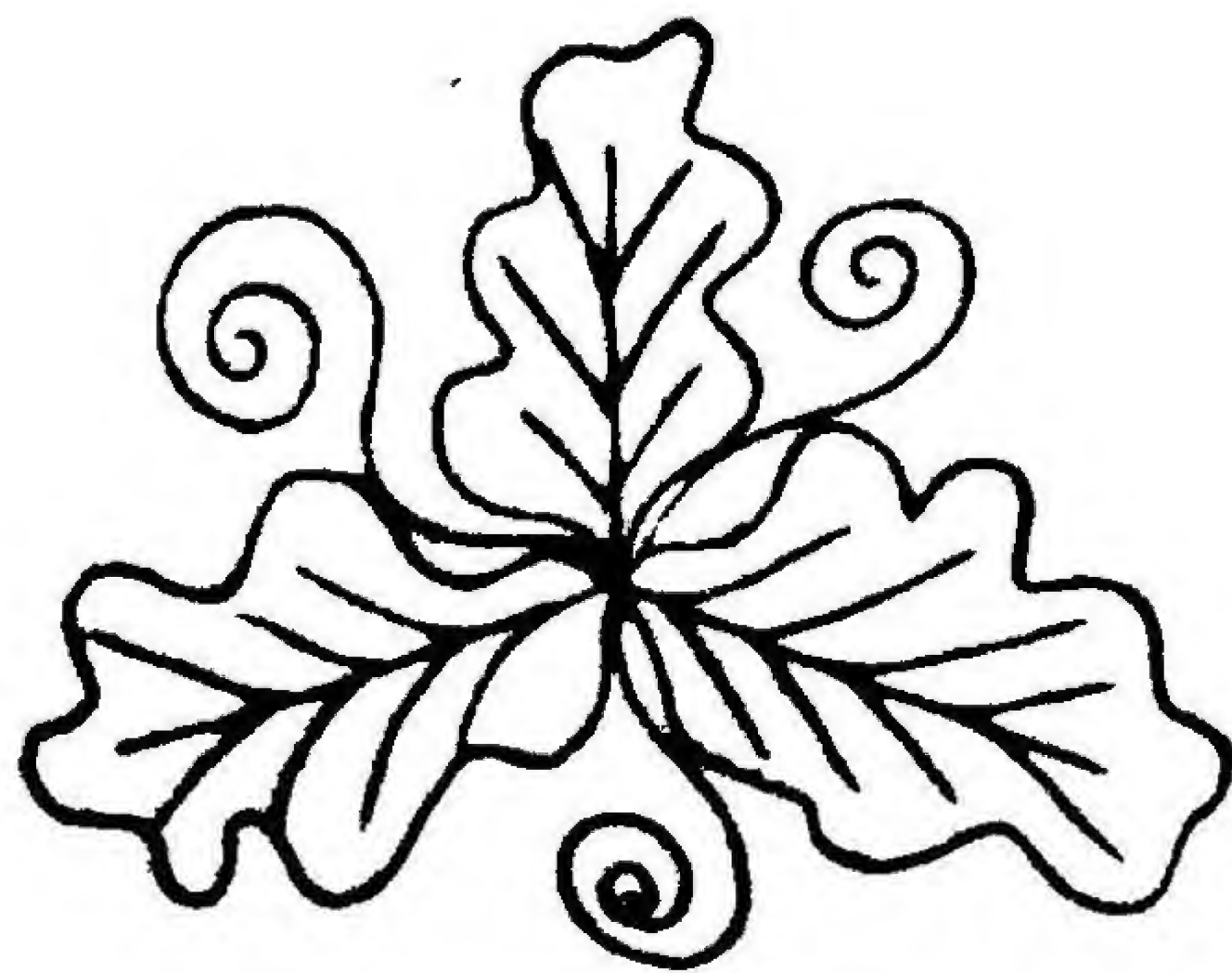
Growing a separate world. When a change
Passed over every one, making them rarer,
Happier, subtler, in our eyes, fairer.
Evenings were full of the sounds of content;
Soft thud of tennis balls, horses that went
Cantering gaily; music afar —
And, from our bedroom window, one star.

TRISTRAM LIVINGSTONE

IMMUTABLE

EVER the hawk will scour a likely field
For little mice a-tremble in their fur.
Deep in the singing wood, dead leaves will shield
A shattered body, and the brittle stir
Of air exploring some small empty skull.
Lax in the spider's morning web, a fly
Hangs like a silver knot, and here a gull
Is spread and ruined that brushed a wing with sky.

So has it always been, and so will be:
Day brings no warmth of comfort in her smile;
Night drops her banners without guarantee
Even of one quiet hour to rest awhile.
But only Man, whose subtle toys increase
The perils, slumbers with a dream of peace.



T. STURGE MOORE

LEGLESS

*'And legless birds of Paradise' — Keats's reference
to a popular error.*

THOU perfect mock, thou beauty,
Endue our clay with grief!
Could flesh acquire duty
Were heartache not a thief?
Although fair form be dumb
Whence else can rapture come?
A consonance from dove-tailed shapes
Like started hare escapes. . . .

Nay, pinioned to aspire,
Footless to scorn the mire,
A torch-flap of that fire
About the night dispersed,
Is beauty, coursed and coursing, so cursing, so
accursed.

On, on, her flight devours
An endless file of hours.
Pursuit reaps no requiting
There lacks her for alighting
Leg, claw and grip . . .
A gaudy ship,
Havenless she floats in air,
And hearts grow sick, she tacks so wide and luffs
so fair!

Trim, trim, antennæ gleaming,
The coquet toy,

Far swept with soundless swish
O'er gloom sequestered fish,
Angles for joy . . .
All feel they must be dreaming,
Watch that and nought beside
Cross the unbounded, the unfathomed, the un-
 lilumined tide,
Leaving in the darkness
Our longing to its starkness.

—Man, over leagues of jumbled impenetrable
 forest

Flitteth what thou adorest;
Then thy sore need grows sorest.
Yet, once or twice, like angel,
She stoops down t'ward a pool;
Flames roaring to estrange all
The still, the mute, the cool . . .
Then wavers, circles, pulses
Retrieving rash descent,
Hovers and convulses,
While flowing plumes back bent
Wreath gorgeous like a rose
About an intense core,
Purpose lapsed! . . . yet soon anew her fate she
 knows

Darts downward as before . . .
Ah! not with power of healing,
But with excess of feeling,
Both courting and revealing
Herself in an abyss.

Responsive to such kindness,
Comrade for headlong rapture,

Rises from depths of blindness
A prey who hopes to capture,
To woo, to kiss.

Twain, all but one they near
Mutually waxing dear!
Eyes, big with image clear,
Fashion the best to be,
Fusion and ecstasy
Of heart in heart!

Truth dawns, they start;
Then, equally wronged, part, part!
One retreats o'er tree-tops far,
Mounts, dwindles, grows a star:
What gulfs those black depths are
To quench that other
Neither mate nor brother,
Without connection
A mere reflection!

Bravely winged from Paradise
Promise stooped, but promise lies!
A bird so incomplete
Lacking both legs and feet
Can neither tread nor yet be trod,
In imitation of the god
Projecting on unending line
Beings fine and superfine.

Yes, a sheer mock is beauty
Endowing clay with grief!
Had flesh conceived of duty
Were heartache not a thief

Robbing the nameless, the unknown
Of kindness and conception?
A bodiless coupling blind and dumb
Whence

Many perfect numbers come;
From consonance of dream-denatured shapes
Melody escapes.

Hence

Occurrence wholly odd,
Which pairs with nothing ruled by law
But braves the world mechanic and its god . . .
Causes that pain which brings love awe . . .
Incalculable, yet can wed with hope
For which the universe yields nowhere scope. . . .
And, cramped in light's house, feels compelled to
grope

Disdaining sidereal islands which men learn
With instruments to number and discern:
Here is an alien immaterial kind
Not to be likened unto aught, save mind!



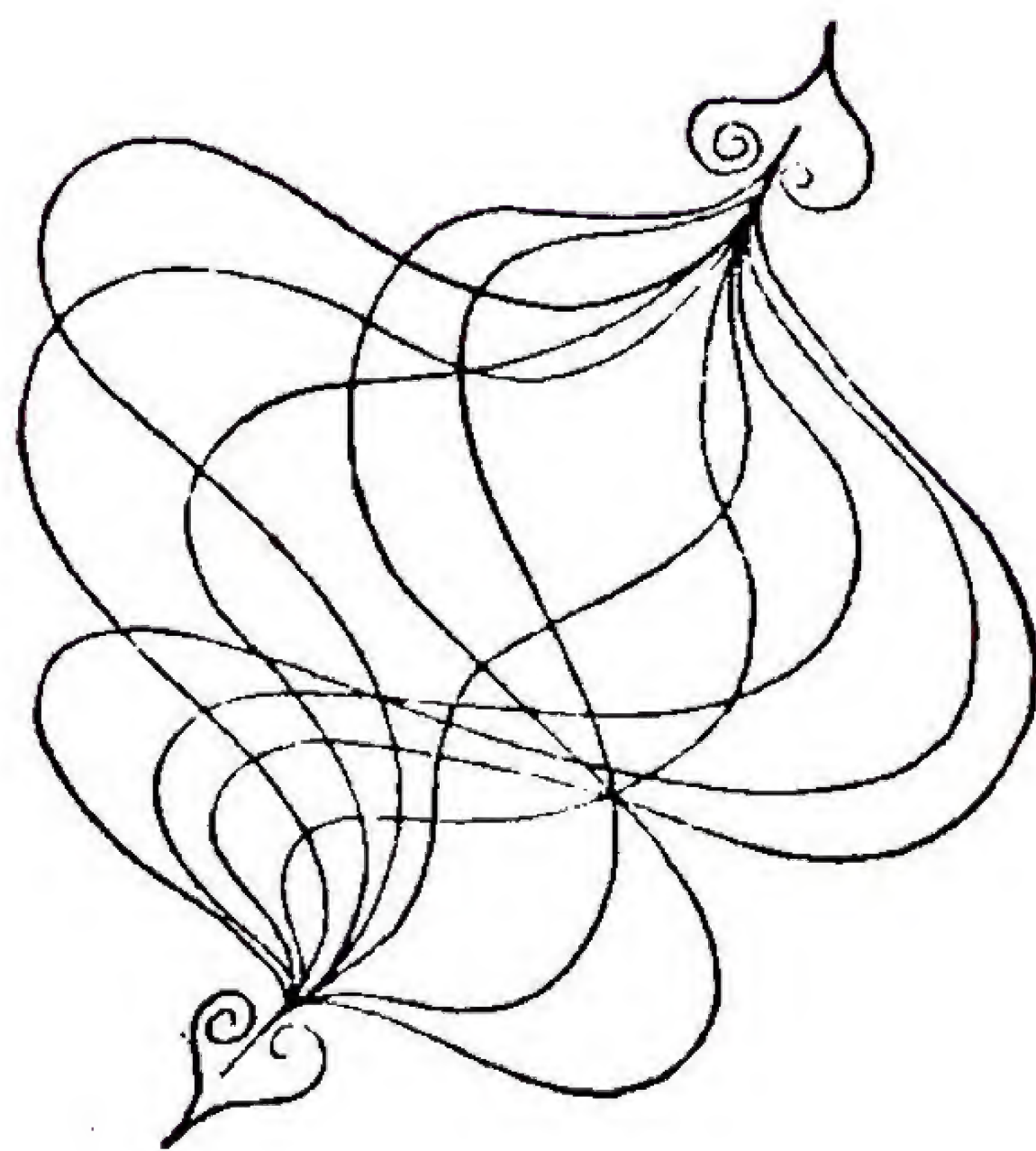
SYDNEY KING RUSSELL

INTERLUDE

THERE is a crispness in November air
That makes the heart forget the touch of grief,
And bids it turn, contemptuous of despair
And sheathe at last the sword of unbelief.

Sweet is the wine of autumn on the lips
And doubly sweet upon the dreaming heart—
Now shadows lengthen, and the slow sun dips
Beyond the crest; the day is split apart.

Dusk hovers, silence stealthily enfolds
The broad domain. . . . Inexorable, grand
November walks the hills, a king who holds
His realm within the hollow of his hand.

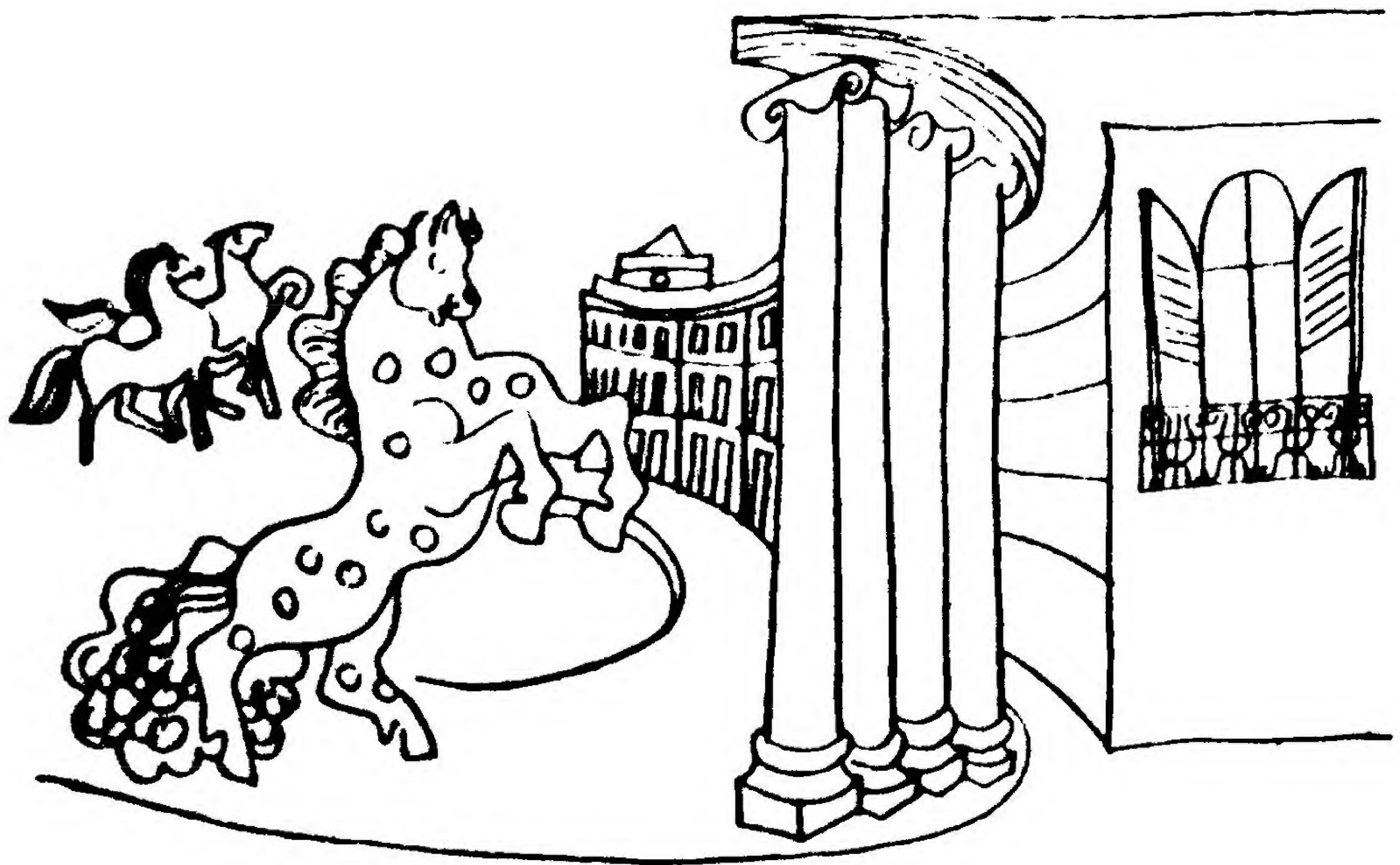


RICHARD BURDICK ELDRIDGE

THE ANSWERING VOICE

THE world is full of voices. Soft or shrill
Or harsh or musical they fill our days —
The voice of Joy that lifts a song of praise,
And Sorrow's voice that bids all joy be still,
The voice of Prayer that seeks to know God's will,
The mingled cries of crowded city ways,
And singing voices from the 'dreamy maze
Where dancing feet wind down a flowery hill.

Ah, fortunate is he who hears at last
Replying to the song that is his own
One answering voice, clear, confident, serene —
A note that blends with the discordant past
Like distant music by a strong wind blown
Through shady spots where quiet grass grows green.



WILFRED ROWLAND CHILDE

THE CHILD WITH THE WHITE CONVOLVULUS

CARRY it, carry it well, it is thy soul,
The symbol of thy self made visible
In this pure spotless chalice; guard it well,
My child, and bear it thus unto thy goal:
Restore it thus unto the Flower of Flowers,
So white, so fair a cup; with tender hand
So bear this glory through the summer land,
The image of thy psyche's inmost powers.

How beautiful is the white flower of the soul,
The sacred blossom of the vine of God,
Which He has given to thee to guard for Him!
Great Kings the pathless wilderness have trod
Beneath the eyes of pitying Seraphim
To find this precious pearl, which doth the stars
control. . . .



WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

WEASEL SNOUT

STARING she
Skindles
the street windows

to daintiness . . .
Under
her driving looks

gems plainly
coloured blue and
red and

green grow
fabulous again. . . . She
is the modern marvel

the ray from
whose bulbous eyes
starts

through glass walls
to animate
dead things—

BLANAID SALKELD

CASUALTIES

WHO would think the Spanish war
Flared like new tenure of a star,
The way our rhymes and writings are?
That Hilliard spilled his boxer's blood
Through Albacete's snow and mud,
And smiled to comrade death, Salud.
That Charlie Donnelly, small, frail,
And flushed with youth, was rendered pale —
But not with fear: in what queer squalor
Was smashed up his so ordered valour,
That rhythm, that steely earnestness,
That peace of poetry, to bless
Discordant thoughts of divers men —
Blue gaze that burned up lie and stain,
Put out by death.
I keep my breath:
So many grow upon my stem,
I cannot take their sap from them.
But to right charity, with spurs,
Through spite's asperity infernal —
My verity of verse
Is nothing else
But rattle of light shells
With no kernel,
Since Dublin boys have striven, and are
Knit to that alien soil, where war
Burns like the inception of a star.

EDWIN MUIR

LETTERS

I

FORGIVENESS now, about to be,
Shrivels and dies, and Memory
Stands in its place. Drawn and old
The offence sits where it sat that night,
Dead venom bubbles, smooth and cold,
That once ran hot into the mould.
I see your tongue stretched back and tight,
Recoiling in the gathered spring,
I see the sideward sweeping sting
Striking secure at all that's mine,
While round us sit the idle ring
Beneath the smooth, unmoving light.
Your tongue rolled backward to the root
And then . . . We both were destitute,
I know, that moment. A malign
Power acted for us, chose alike
Me to be struck and you to strike.
It was not you. Yet how efface
The spider's web spun on your face
That instant, prise it from its place?

Yes, what can we do? Tell, help me how
To untie the knot of Then and Now,
Re-act the act, then slough it clean,
Leaving the pure essential scene,
Never touched light and hurtless air.

It was not we. But we were there.
Our eyes saw. Can they see again

A different spectacle? Extricate
The fatal actors from the Fate
That moved the act? Come, let us feign
A desperate reconciliation,
Rise woundless from our separate palls,
Retrieve our parts but keep our souls
Our own.

The ever-waiting walls
Close in. We are there. I see the spring
Just moving.

Now, if we can fling
Our whole weight on it, we are free,
And full forgiveness yet may be!

II

Tried friendship must go down perforce
Before the outward eating rage
And murderous heart of middle age,
Killing kind memory at its source,
If it were not for mortality,
The thought of It that levels all
And coldly pillows side by side
The tried friend and the too-much tried.

Then think of that which will have made
Us and all else contemporary.
Look long enough and you will see
The dead fighting with the dead.
Now's the last hour for chivalry,
Now we can still escape the shame
Of striking the unanswering head,
Before we are changed put off the blame.

But should this seem a niggardly
And ominous reconciliation,
Look yet again until you see,
Fixed in the body's final station,
The features of immortality.
Try to pursue this quarrel then.
You cannot. This is less than man
And more. That more is our salvation.
Now let us seize it. Now we can, we can!



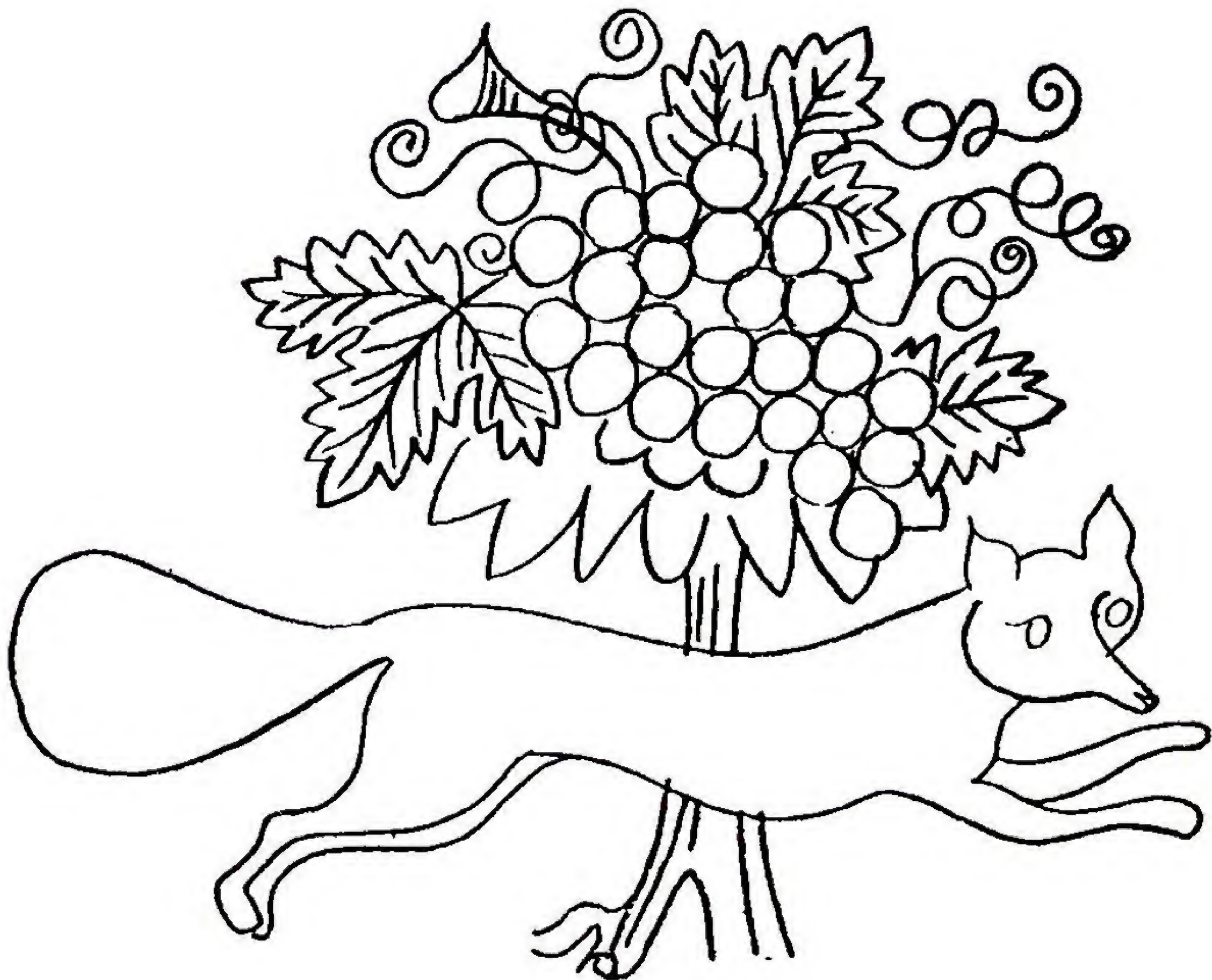
OSCAR WILLIAMS

PRESENT TENSE

INCISIVE as the vivid rose
Searing the eyes of sense,
Against the past's unclouded snows
There breathes the present tense.

Though God may sleep with suns for dreams
Beneath blue feather quilts,
And thought may walk the gilded streams
On seven-leaguèd stilts, —

The present tense is in my bone,
So welded to the heart
It would take all of earth's great stone
To shatter us apart.



RUTH PITTER

THE STOCKDOVE

CLOSE in the hollow bank she lies,
Soiling with clay her azure dress:
Then slowly lifts that head, whose eyes
Have given a name to gentleness.
O is she caught, and is she snared,
Or why so still, and perched so low?
She is not ruffled, is not scared,
And yet I watch and cannot go.

And dumbly comes the hard reply;
Death shakes her like a winter storm;
Then her round head she would put by
As she was wont, in feathers warm:
Half lifts the wing, half turns the bill,
Then leans more lowly on the clay,
Sighs, and at last is quiet and still;
Sits there, and yet is fled away.

The epoch will not suffer me
To weep above such humble dead,
Or I could mourn a century
For all such woe unmerited;
For the soft eye, the feathers blue,
The voice more gentle than the rain,
The bill that dabbled in the dew,
We strew the field with poisoned grain.

My questioned spirit's sidelong look
From her old fortress answers me,
From where she reads her secret book
On the tall rock Infinity:

From where the innocent dead to that
High place is fled away from grief,
And whence as from an Ararat
She brings the silver olive-leaf.



CHARLES HANSON TOWNE

SURPLUS

THERE'S more than April in an April flower
And more than sweetness lies in caves of honey.
Be sure of this: in Love's delirious hour
There's more than in a miser's golden money.

Unmeasured is the shining wealth of youth,
Uncountable the wonders in a wood;
Yet secret voices speak the shining truth
To those who, listening, have understood.

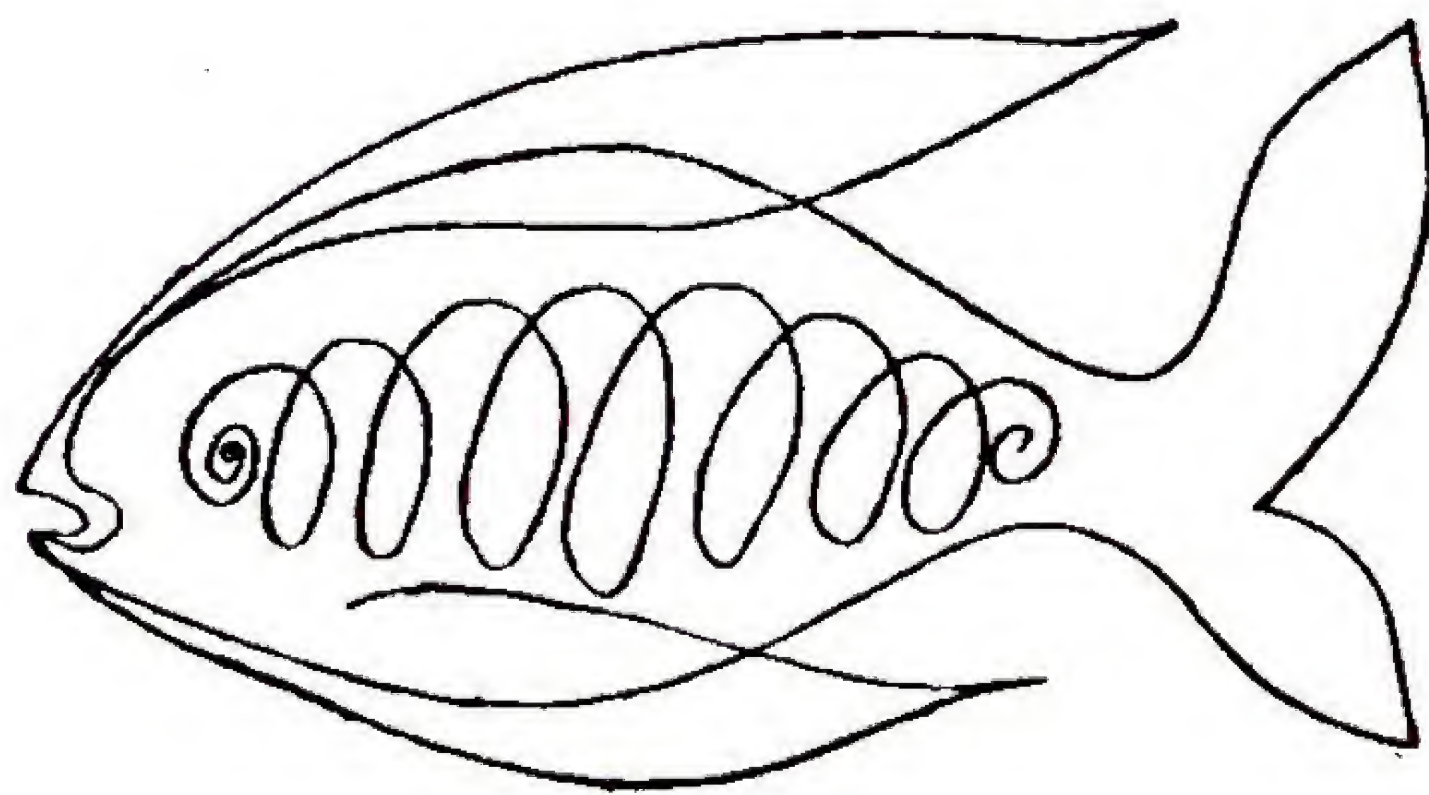


ANDERSON M. SCRUGGS

ON SEEING A MARBLE BUILDING CLEANED

THE gale of steam against your walls
Brings back the glory time has hidden,
And now I see at intervals
Bright roses rise from stone unbidden
By any urge of wind or weather;
Beneath the warm fictitious rain
Petals and stems uncurl together
Out of their soil of stone and stain.
I see time-blackened cornices
Quicken again with leaf and fern
As fresh as spring, and by degrees,
The maidens on the arch return.
The virgin whiteness of their dress
Billows in marble round their feet;
Like resurrected loveliness,
They lighten all the dingy street.

When I am old, and silting time
Has laid its dust on every sense,
And like dim sculpture under grime
Lies buried all life's recompense,
God grant some swift, transcendent hour,
Some new-found love, some dream reblown,
To bring lost youth again to flower
Like roses waking out of stone.



LORD GORELL

HOMUNCULUS

I

IF I had scaled the mountains, trod the snows
That once I saw uplifted to the skies
In stateliness of solitude;
If, striding onward, as Life's prize
My hand had clutched the flower that grows
A gleam beyond the lingering line
Of clambered fir and lofted pine;
If I had stood
Above the tumult, outlined and alone,
A central light for lifted eyes,
Should I have known,
Deep in the silence of my being's throne,
The mystery and blessing that are mine?

II

If I had won by arrowy ways —
As once I planned,
Straining Ilysses' bow in ardent youth —
Into the gold, the envied band;
If I had borne as guerdon of my days
A nation's enterprise and praise,
Should I be nearer now to Truth?
Should I the better understand
The anguish and the ecstasy,
The storms and sunshafts on the changing land
That gloom and glorify
The pulses of humanity?
Should I now have the mind to gaze,
By jealousy of conflict all unvexed,

On Beauty's simple text
And over many a little thing
To throw the warmth of Love's remembering?

III

If I a purple robe had worn
And dwelt at ease
Breathing the harmonies
Of mullioned mansion of ancestral fame,
The seigneur of a countryside,
My words with wide-winged influence sped;
If I had thus been born
To garnered wealth and ancient name,
Spilling upon me all the luxuries,
Making Earth's course a game
Played wheresoever Fancy led,
How should I, eager-eyed,
Life's lasting courage claim,
The constant humours of contrivance share,
Know the long fun
That is for every one
Who learns the saving for a venture rare,
And feel with quickened heart of pride
The moving millions, Fortune's staff denied,
Whose steadfast strength far heavier burdens bear?

IV

Thanks for the nameless and the vast unknown
Made in God's image, all the yearning crowd
That suffer the same pains,
That bear the human yoke
In universal service dumbly bowed,
Yet gather mirth

Out of the self-same sense of joke
As comes to any king!
We little folk
That fill the valleys, jostle in the plains,
We are the myriad harvests sown
Throughout the fields of Earth,
We are the road of every travelling,
We are the source from which the great ones spring,
We are the clay
To which their plastic art they bring,
To rest on us their waves of triumph curve,
We are the end they serve,
The shore beyond the glitter of their day.

v

Why should we labour with our minds a-thirst,
Beyond the labour, for the wage?
Why strive for garlands, struggling to be first?
Time levels all with stilly hand,
The favoured and accursed:
Even as the wind across the sand
Scurries the little hummocks, age by age
Earth's values alter, Heaven's remain.
How small a manhood's task it is to strain
Tiptoe on jealousy that we may stand
Above our fellows and engage
In rivalry not born of pride but price!
Enough and more than all
In this world to suffice
Not less the great mind than the small
Lies Life's one high command —
Unwhimpering yet unenvious, seek to gain
To the very end of strength the upland ways,

The journey's joy our echoing call,
That we may to our lifted selves attain,
Glad of the great wind's freedom, of the climb,
The gift of power, the will to dare,
The pageant of the passing days,
The splendour of Earth's rhyme.
We little wanderers, wistful in the maze,
We can rejoice when others have the praise
For steeples of the brain
And bask in sunshine's blaze;
We need not fear the falling of the rain.
If ours the mountain air,
That vintage of the spirit, ever free,
No need have we to combat care
Or feel our life in vain:
Soul-borne immortally
Over Hope's boundless sea,
Our guide the morning star,
No man amongst us but can journey far.
Unsceptred though we be
We are the countless conquerors of Time—
All little momentary folk are we,
Yet all the fragments of Eternity.



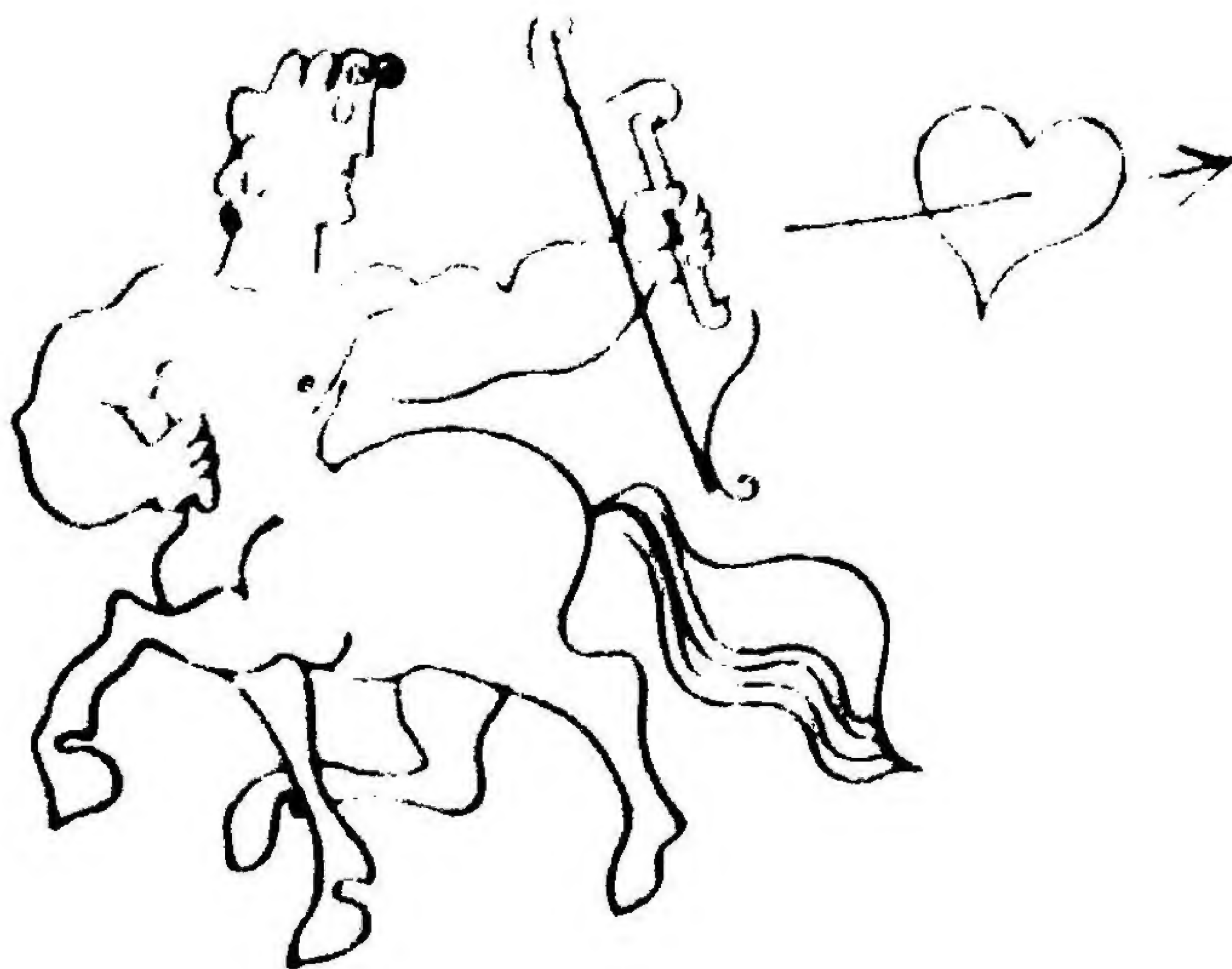
LOUISE McNEILL

MIDNIGHT SONG

CLOSE, weary eyes . . . the unread page will wait.
(White herons wade a deep and moveless stream.)
Close, twisted lips . . . the lips that you berate
Are bound beneath the ether-gauze of dream.

Dull, wind, your arrows without mark.
Think of leaves falling from a moon-strung bough.
Attend no longer, ears, the close-tongued dark.
The bells of huddled flocks will reach you now.

Rest, rest, O Day-Possessed . . . fumble no more,
Hands, since a woman's toil is never done,
Rest, rest, O Weariest . . . lie on a shore
Where tilted orchid-bowls scatter the sun.



CLIFFORD DYMENT

THE SNOW

IN no way that I chose to go
Could I escape the falling snow.

I shut my eyes, wet with my fears:
The snow still whispered in my ears.

I stopped my ears in deaf disguise:
The snow still fell before my eyes.

Snow was my comrade, snow my fate,
In a country huge and desolate.

My footsteps made a shallow space,
And then the snow filled up the place,

And all the walking I had done
Was on a journey not begun.

I did not know the distance gone,
But resolutely travelled on,

While silently on every hand
Fell the sorrow of the land,

And no way that I chose to go
Could lead me from the grief of snow.

V. JAMES CHRASTA

TOWARD DEFEAT

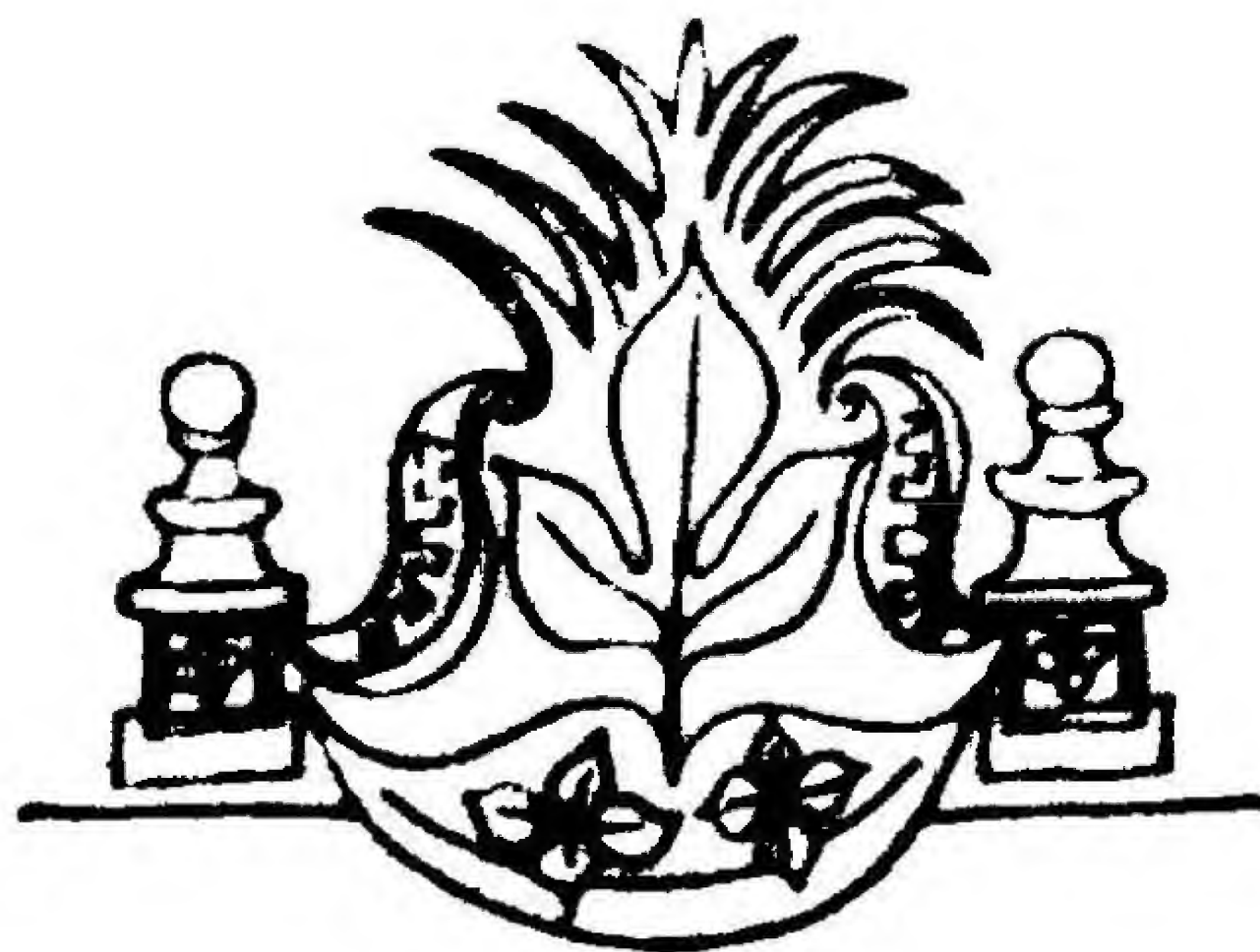
BEYOND the fence the woodlands press
Their ever-sieging tides;
Beneath the rails, in restlessness,
The furtive brier glides.

Not one of us; the father, son,
Against encroaching odds,
But sees defeat already run
The gamut twenty rods;

Knowing that no one after us
Will curb these greater hordes,
Not one to stand, as we stand thus,
With plough-shares for our swords.

Not long and after us will rise
The starweed and the dock,
Where we no longer may devise
This counter-thrust they mock.

Not long, and up the taken field,
The bolder tides will dare,
Knowing the weaker land must yield
With us no longer there.



ANNE HAMILTON

TRANSCIENCE

THE throbbing vein
in her wrist is still. . . .

Where the counterpane
made a carven hill,
her thin sweet flesh,
discreetly boned,
lies only a mesh
as loosely coned
as heaped-up stack
of needles and knitting. . . .

But look! through the slack
in the tissues fitting
a light leaps surely,
not evanescent,
but sharply, purely
incandescent!

Out through the shutter,
skimming the grasses,
fire-fly flutter
translucently passes!
Love, one last touch!
But no light lingers
for the satiate clutch
of intimate fingers.
Gone like a spark
through the dark pine's ravelling,
passing the lark
in more certain travelling;
on the peacock sky

a retreating blur,
but here all I
required of her. . . .

Cold, her brain;
betrayed, her will;
and the high blue vein
in her wrist is still!



J. C. BAYLISS

'WHEN MOONS ARE DEAD'

WHEN moons are dead and winter's pallid breath
Blows ever still more strong upon the rose,
And every opening bud is closed in death
And Autumn shudders to its last long close,
Then summer gold turns brown with speckled rust
And withered flowers sting with half-dry scent
Which rises from their blossom ringed with dust, . . .
The last poor witness of their blandishment.
But half-remembered joys return to smile
Their final greeting while the shadows dance,
And I must watch them for a little while
Before I leave their bitter dalliance: . . .
When scented flowers and silver moon have fled,
My dreams, my love, and I were better dead.



R. N. CURREY

AS BRAVE AS CÆSAR

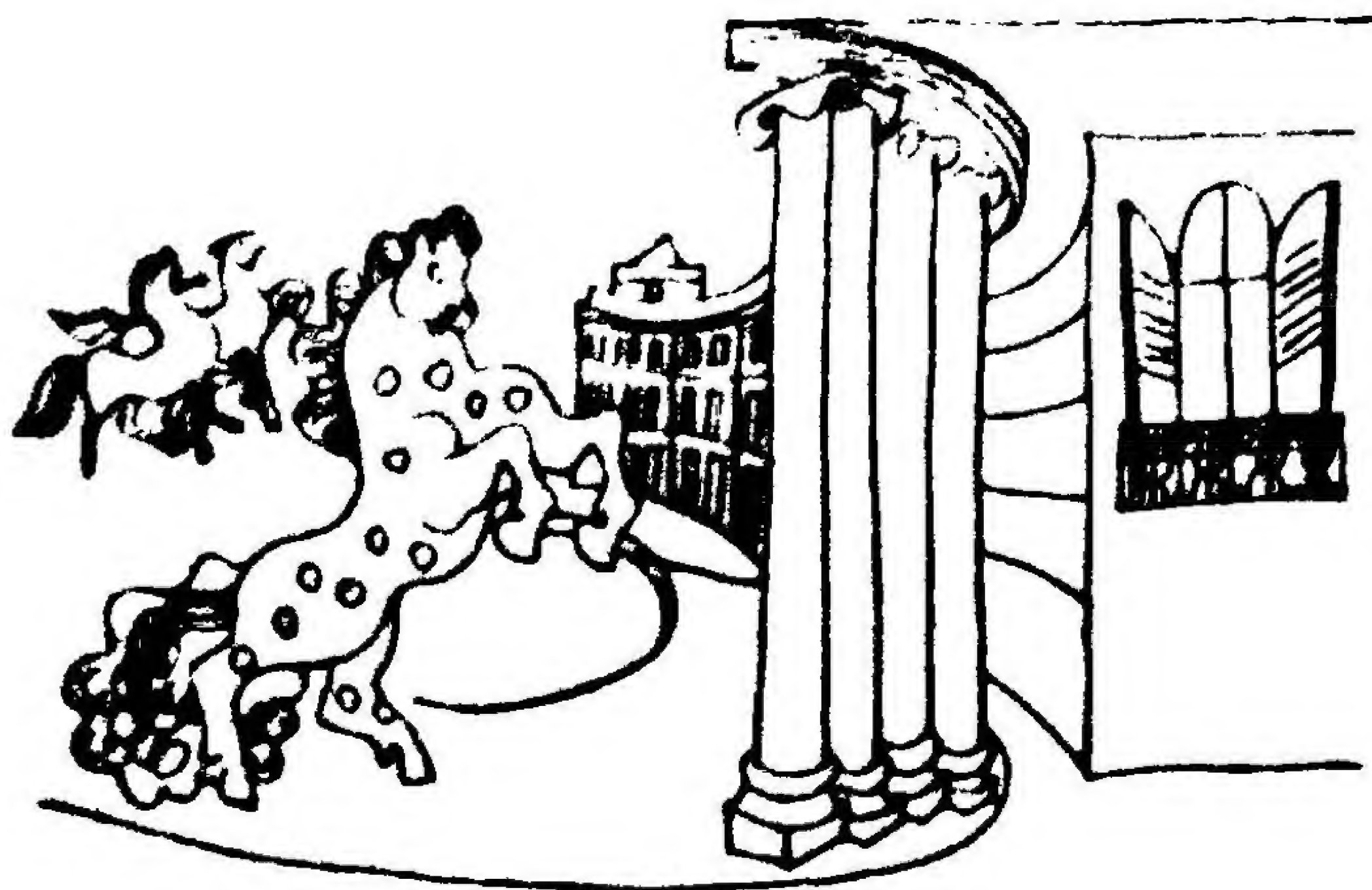
(After Olivier Basselin, fifteenth century)

I AM as brave as Cæsar in this war
Armed to the very teeth with jug and glass;
Better a charge of wine that leaves no scar
Than bullets spilling life that soon must pass.

Give me the bottle's for the battle's clash,
Barrels and casks of rich vermilion wine
For my artillery with which to smash
This thirst that I invest and undermine.

As far as I can see a man's a clown
Who would not rather get his broken head
By drinking than by fighting for renown;
What use will his renown be when he's dead?

Better to hide your nose in a tall glass
Than in a soldier's helmet, better far
Let drum and ensign call in vain, and pass
Beneath an inn-sign to this other war.



JULIA JOHNSON DAVIS

RAG PICKERS

NO ploughman ploughed this field. No lark enchanted

Has soared and sung above its early green,
In this foul soil no grain was ever planted,

And yet these piteous gleaners come to glean,
Patient and slow they bend above each furrow,

O humble fruit, be ready to the hand!

Theirs is a need that cannot wait to-morrow,

Nor any promise of a richer land.

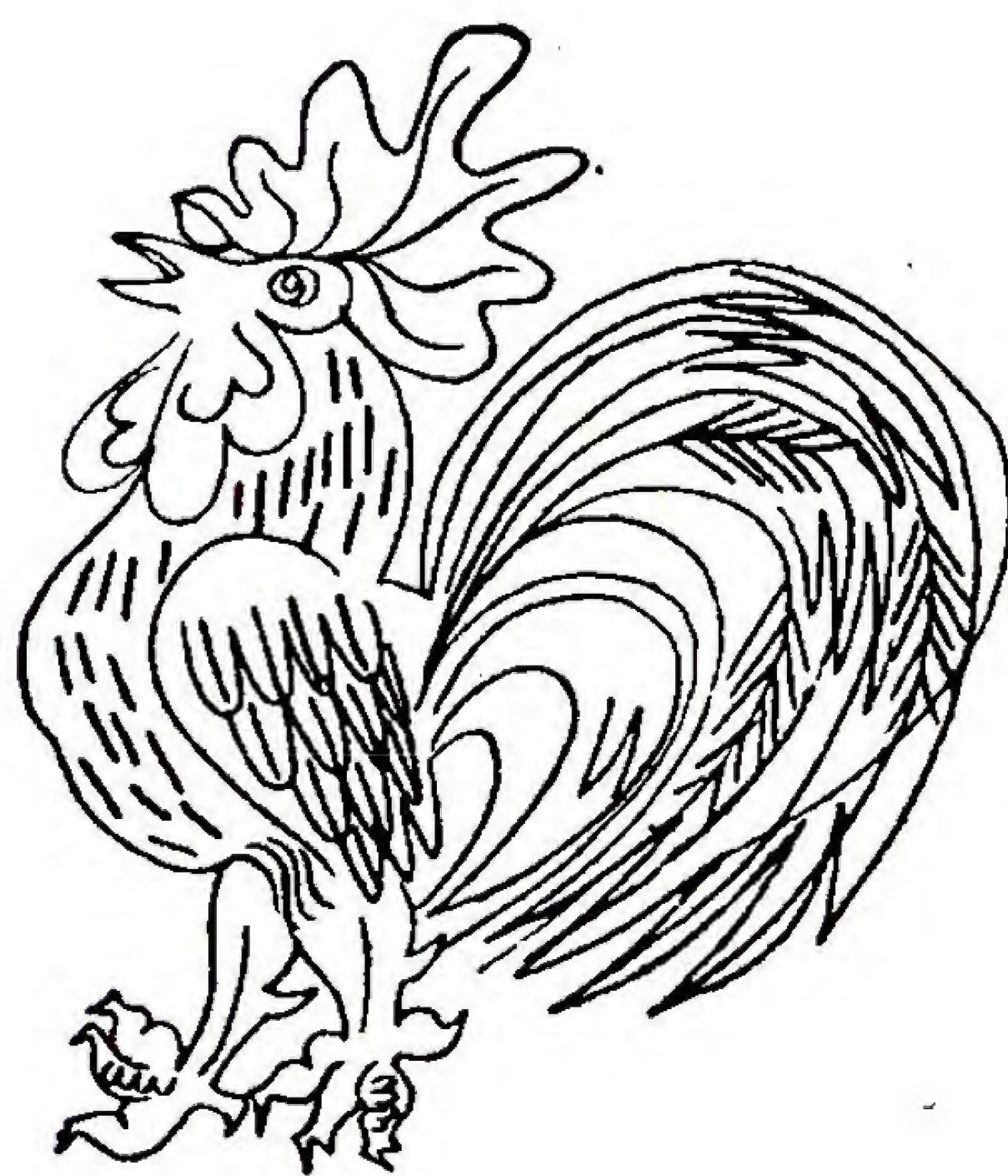
They have no kinsman. Though the wains are
creaking,

The bins piled high, barns bursting at the door,
Though other men have surfeit for the seeking,

And eat their fill, and leave not less but more—

Theirs is a hunger that must still endure,

Who know the daily famine of the poor.



M. E. MASON

PRAYER

LORD, may the glory of the closing year —
The harvest-time, the place of levelled fields,
The scent of the late roses, and the fires
That Autumn sets alight among the woods,
Slow-homing cattle in the falling dusk,
The misty uplands and the sheep in fold,
The warm still nights, the dark skies filled with stars
And secret-dreaming orchards with the moon
Full shining on the apple trees . . .
Lord, may all lovely things like these
Be for remembering in the songless noon,
And night grown bitter cold. . . .



ROBERT P. TRISTRAM COFFIN

A FATHER IS A STRANGE THING

A FATHER is a strange thing, he will leap
Across a generation and will peep
Out of a grandson's eyes when unexpected
With all the secrets of him resurrected.

A man is taken by complete surprise
To see his father looking from the eyes
Of a little boy he thought his own
And thought he had the breeding of alone.

His father looks direct through eyes new blue,
His father moves on stout thighs quick and new,
He takes hold of things as once he did,
And none of his old handsomeness is hid.

The grace the father thought well hid away
Shines like the sun upon a boy at play,
The love he kept so close for none to see
Looks up naked at the father's knee.

All the proud, high ways his father had
Are lowered to his knee. A man is sad
To see them so, but then he catches breath
To see how one so loved has cheated death.

FRAY ANGELICO CHAVEZ

SOUTH-WESTERN NIGHT

THE night had pitched her tar-dark tent
Which leaked with starlight everywhere,
When by the road on which I went
I came upon the firelit shapes
Of shepherds, lean and bent.

There was no wind to shake the flame
To which they drew me civilly,
Much less their voices when I came.
(My coming did not cut their words
To even ask my name.)

Their talk was unaware of wars
And innocent of rapes or polls;
Each phrase fell in Gregorian bars,
And while their cadence skimmed the soil
They seemed to touch the stars.

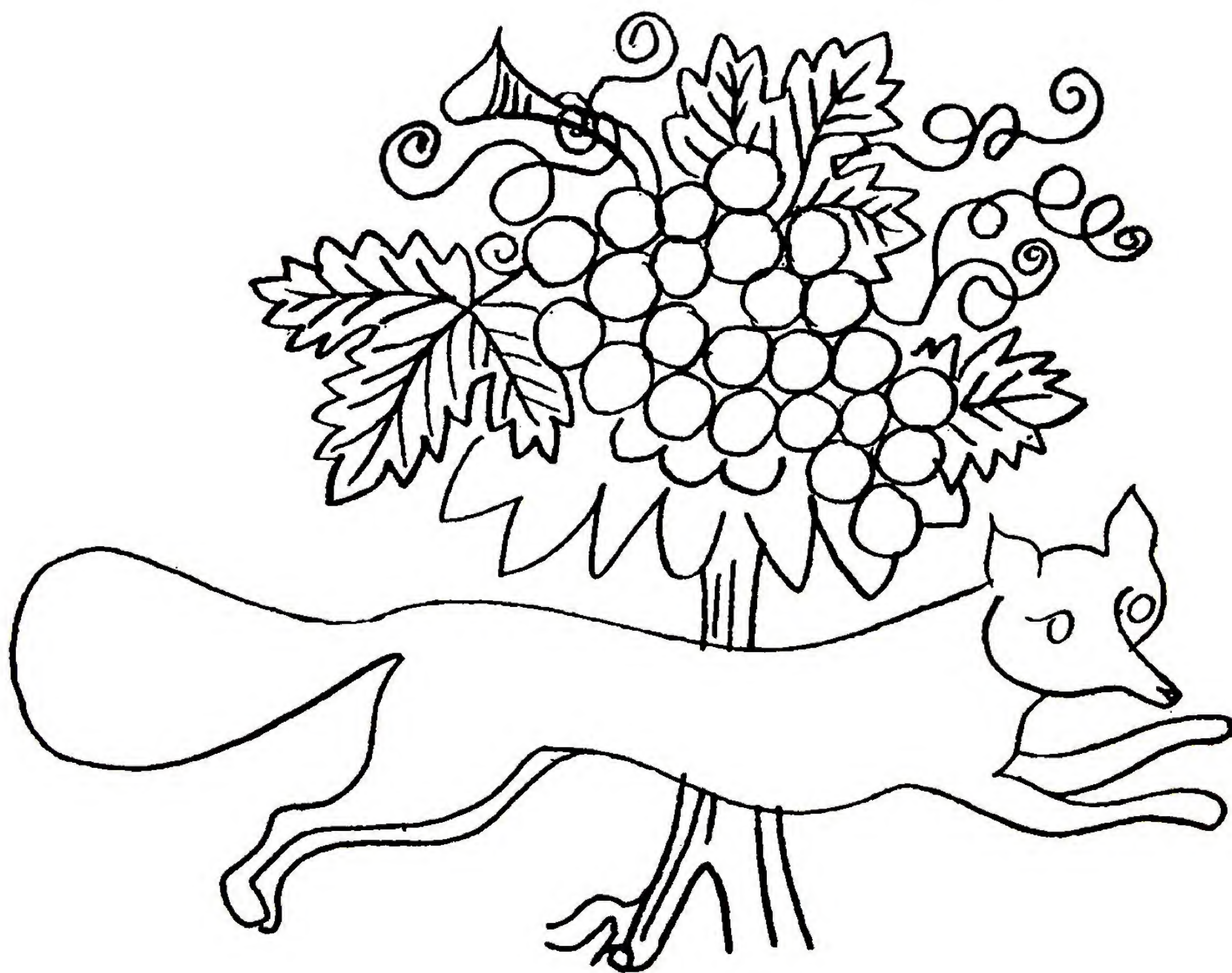
Up to the ceiling's taut, dark crown
They flowed as one, the strand of smoke,
Their thread of thought; and as my own
Turned heavenward to follow them,
The dew of stars dripped down.



GEOFFREY JOHNSON

VILLAGE CURFEW

EIGHT slow strokes of a belfry clock;
Just time for a footstep's falling and failing,
For a man's gigantic silhouette
To travel a stone's-throw length of paling.
Then frosty silence and emptiness,
The cottage-smokes in level streamers
Transversely blown from sparkling pots
Over the heads of doers and dreamers;
Then stars like fireflies twinkling through
The chimney's milky nebulae;
The sphinxian cat on a post of stone,
And the round moon's all-seeing eye.



GEOFFREY JOHNSON

SET YOUR FACE ONCE MORE

SET your face once more to the East wind,
Get over once more the barren wait
For the bright event outside the mind
To change the world's or your own state.

Set your face once more to the long road.
Once more warm dreams of overnight
Are flat as whey, are chill as the toad,
Are ashen-dead in the heedless light.

Set your face once more to the sky's line
Which lithe centurion, pilgrim, friar,
Self-weaned at last of the hoped-for sign,
Set their faces to, with purer fire.

Shut your heart once more to the voice feigning
There's bread in stones and grapes on moors;
Hope nothing, step proudly and uncomplaining:
Time cancelled their grief, as it cancels yours.

Yet, if it should happen, for there's no telling
Where hope abandoned may suddenly glow,
That an hour before the twilight's knelling
The burning Face from the seven-fold bow

Should pierce your heart with a joy like gillies
As the moments beat their gongs of gold
And rods in the miracle burst in lilies —
Let your heart sing out, let the world be told.

FRED LAPE

FROM THIS THE STRENGTH

THE fog had made a twilight on the water.
The shore rocks rose, ugly and aged teeth
Of earth, discoloured at their bases where
The tide had ebbed. Upon their tops the gulls
Stood silently facing the hidden sea.

Two boys with garbage came to the land's edge.
The gulls rose in the mist, circling the boys,
Crying about their heads, gliding down air.
The boys leaned out and slung their load of waste
Over the rocks. Shrieking the gulls swept down.
Their bodies wove together by the cliff.
The strongest found the food. The others swung
In circles waiting turn, or poised on water,
Beating their wings like butterflies, or clinging
To the wet rocks, let the slow roll of surf
Surge under lifted wings. One gull flew out
With red meat in his bill. The fog received
Him in its arms; only the white tail shone,
A comet curving down the sphere of mist.
Two gulls settled upon the cliff again.
They stretched and shook their wings, and folded
them
Feather by feather to their sides, like old
Housewives storing their linen into drawers.

The boys went back. The gulls had cleaned the
waste
And one by one soared off into the fog.

The ugly was consumed, gone to the bone,
The sinew, feather, wing, to the sure grace
Of flight, the strength to beat against the air
And take the strong wind currents of the sky.



PAUL SELVER

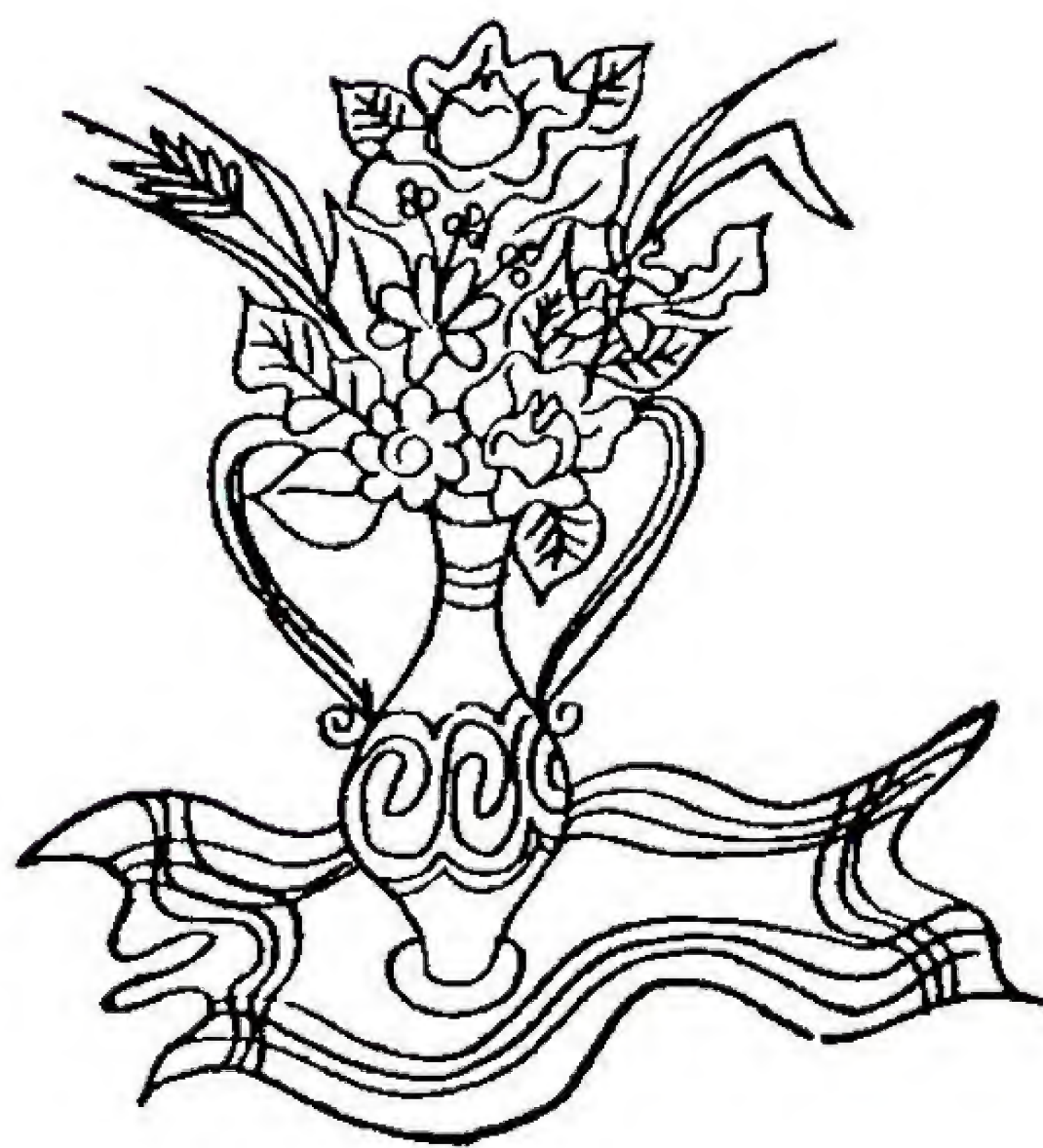
ETCHING OF A BOOKMAN

WHO plumbed the depths of drivel, and who
wrote
Gibberish boshier than any yet?
The mouthpiece of the lowest highbrow set,
A cross between a jackass and a stoat.

He is the spokesman of flummery, and where
Clap-trap is penned, or clots of spoof are splashed
On canvas, or a piano is being bashed
By tuneless pummellings, he's there, he's there.

To call him half-wit would be fulsome praise,
For he is witless. He is the lord of guff,
The crazy tout of every arty craze,
Panjandrum of the bogus, champion of bluff.

His fame is huge. Close on a hundred read him
While, at the very least, quite twenty heed him.



EDMUND BLUNDEN

IN THE MARGIN

WHILE few men praise and hardly more defend
That armed power which from here, and as
things are,

Appears the whole Japan; while this forced war
Inhuman drags to some inglorious end,
And kills, and fires, and fouls, I too must feel
Horror and wonder at the deeds thus done,
And fear each day's exploit of crashing steel
Has merely lost what old Japan had won.

But through the smoke and dust I still can see,
And may I not forget, much that belongs
To that great name 'Japan' as well as those.
Faultless devotions raise clear eyes to me;
Through crowded streets gray-headed virtue goes,
And from poor farms I hear old peaceful songs.



WILLARD MAAS

TRANSCONTINENTAL

A VENUES of traffic the blonde from
Illinois
the gilded plaster cupids second-run house

Here the cathedral the brass inscription BANK
red velvet carpet tapers chromium rail

*We must find roads to follow the alley is blind
and the parks at night are lonely without the music*

Love was the light in the rooming house the
liquor
made us sing under his hand the breast

*Rivers of the heart breathe on flowing
With love under the winter-burdened sky
We have come a long way we are lonely
and we have songs to sing we have forgotten*

Across Wyoming the freight cart beat the tracks
spreading newspaper on the boards they slept

*White hyacinths of April mornings sent
to lips of burning music and the blood
chanting the birds' sweet fortune to the air
Return*

*return
the hands clasped to the hands
the figures on the wall march to the grave*

**They found him under the tree the pistol in his hand
the note pencilled on the back of a cheque**

*Go write a rhyme of love and death
The night is wide and stars for us to follow
We have come a long way and the dark
is stilled with purple violets and the sky
but with a path of fire above the street*

**The bank doors close the choir seats are empty
Place the platform here upon the curb**

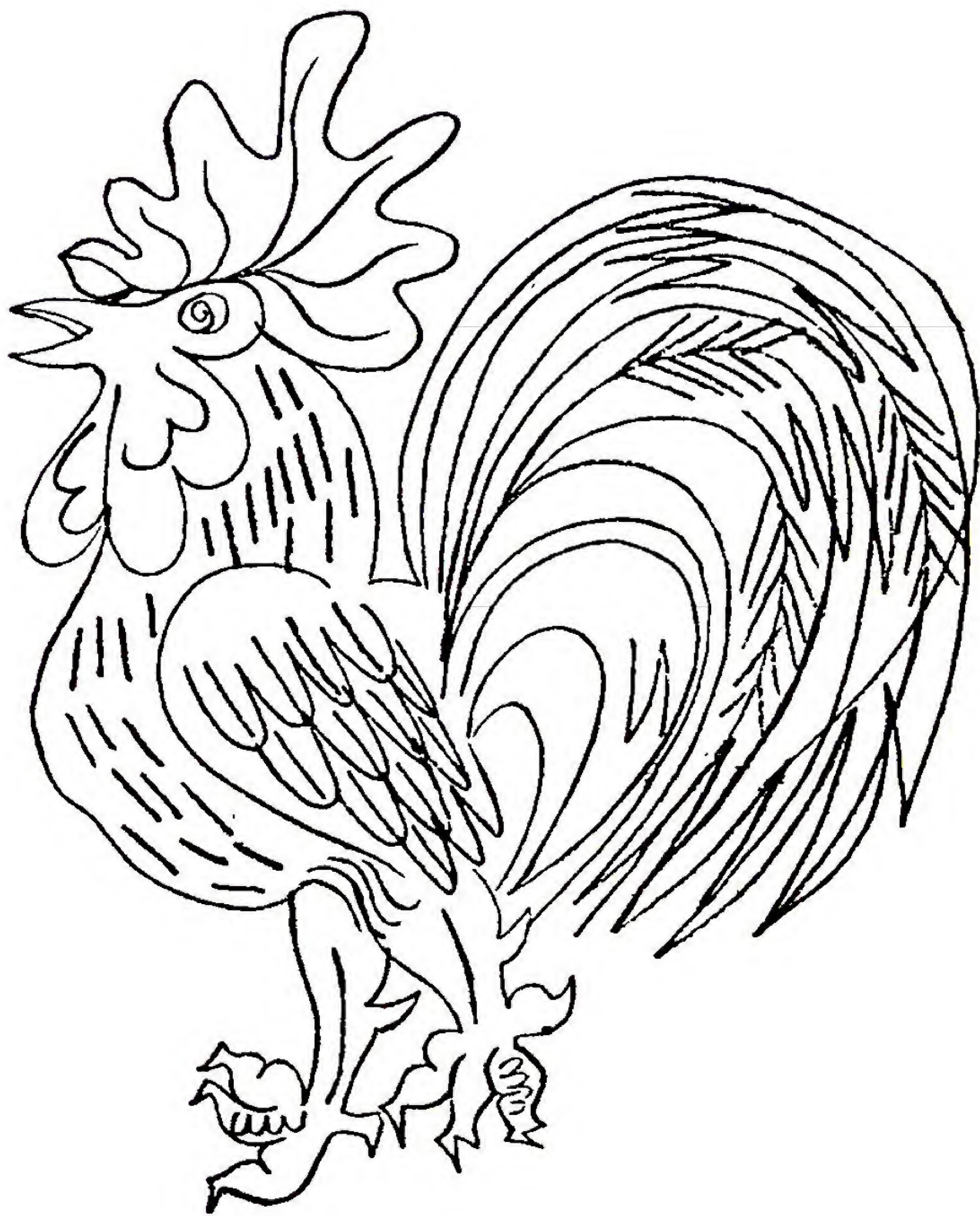


WALTER DE LA MARE

TWICE LOVELY

CHALK-WHITE, light dazzled on the stone,
And there, a weed, a finger high,
Bowed its silvery head with every
Breath of wind that faltered by.

Twice lovely thing! For when there drifted
A cloud across the radiant sun,
Not only that had it forsaken,
Its tiny shadow too was gone.



HOWARD MCKINLEY CORNING

NEVER DENY A MOUNTAIN

NEVER deny a mountain: it will fall
Over your stateliest pace,
It will bow you down by the tall
Shadow upon your face.

Demise will make you little, who should be great.
You will go lame to find
That lifted enormous weight
Plunging against your mind.

Days will come too early, nights too slow.
You will not see the length
Of earth beneath you for the sun's glow
On that granite strength.

Never deny a mountain: it is your power.
It is yourself afraid
In that shaken importunate hour
When the earth's aid

Crumbles like ancient leaves, when the hands
Let go the beautiful flame;
And you cry to the mountain and the wordless
lands
To speak your name.

JOHN IRVINE

MAIRI

UNQUIET my heart
When she is near,
As the woods
In the young year.

Wilder my thoughts
Than birds that soar
In blue air
By the lake shore.

Would she but hear
The songs I made
By the brook
In the hazel glade.

O heart be still
And let her pass,
As grey mist
On the sweet grass.

And dream of her
With the dark eyes,
When stars come
And a wind cries.



DANIEL WHITEHEAD HICKY

SOUVENIR

TURNING a page, I come upon a flower:
It was a lilac once, but not again.
To-day it is a hill, a windy hour,
A blow of petals shining in the rain.
It is a lad, a lass, of seventeen,
A soft word spoken, and a life begun,
A tide of spring that flowed triumphant, green,
The rising and the setting of a sun.
I do not read the book; I merely turn
A page to find the faded flower there,
And for a moment constellations burn,
A sudden April breathes upon the air.
How small a thing, this book grown thin and old,
To shelter what two hearts could never hold!



GILBERT THOMAS

POSSESSION

TO see and to hear: what are they but to be blind
And deaf? It is only when the eyes are closed,
And the turbulent spirit is composed
To quiet, that, in loosing, we truly bind
Even the harvest eye and ear have gleaned.
All the riches of colour we ever saw;
All the wealth of music we ever heard,
Of wind and sea, of organ, or child, or bird;
All the laughter of friends—and love's
own light:
Only now, redeemed from sound and
sight,
Only now, from mere possession weaned,
Do we hold these things at last, secure and free.
Only when from her presence we withdraw
Do we know Time's innermost heart: Eternity.



ALEXANDER REID

FLIGHT

EARTH tilts: with the sweep of a grey gull gliding
And moving as easily, curve we in space,
Sure of our poise and in rising, dividing
The streams of the winds till the clouds give place
To the cool clear halls where the stars are burning,
The sun unveiled, and the planets turning.

Here at a height where the eagle failing,
Flutters at nothing and falls to die;
Where the only sound is the meteor's wailing
Cry, and the journeying comet's sigh;
Here beyond range of the earth's emotion
Rest we on wings in a trance of motion.

Purged of all pity and pain and sorrow,
Empty of hope and despair and shame,
Free of the earth and the dreams that follow
Are flickering out on the track we came;
Here with our fate as the planets are
Hang we in space but another star.

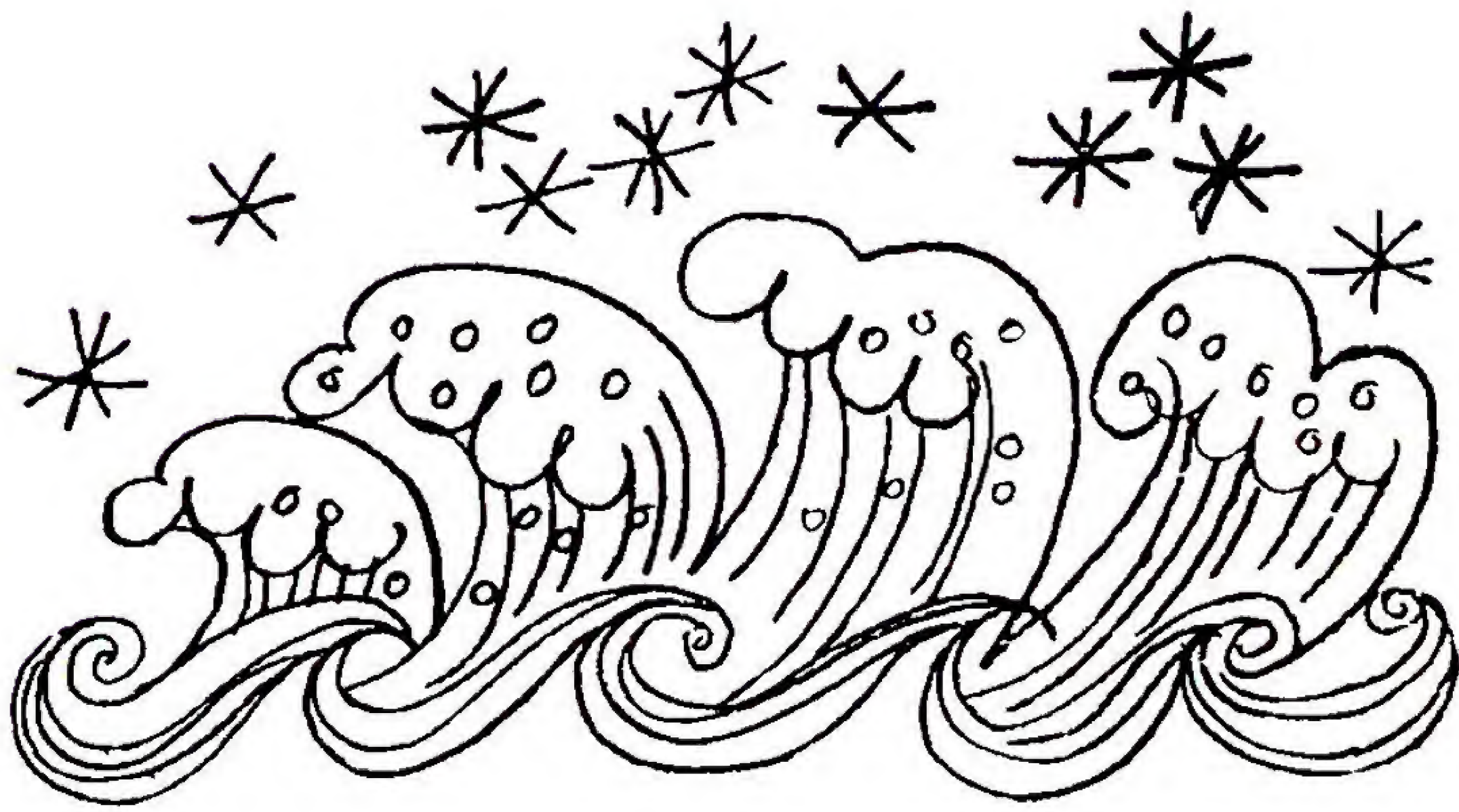


WITTER BYNNER

FACE ALIVE

HER senseless face, still living mortally,
Stares now with eyes too far away to see
What honour may have been or grace or love
Or anything that they were quickened of.

It is not death, this open-mouthed decay,
This aged face with nothing more to say:
It is not death but a good life's reward
And testimony to the unknown Lord.



RUTHVEN TODD

POEM

HE went from the harsh tower of words,
Ancestral home of his mad angry god,
Who flung the lightning and laid flat the wood,
Crushing the field-mice and the nestling birds.
He went from the high tower his fathers
Had built for him upon the edge of light:
Thinking things different in the world without
He hoped the cues would come to him from others.

He chose the hard path at the cross-roads
As younger sons had done for many years,
And aped the men he met, the latest modes,
Until he reached the climax of his fears
And thought he recognised the thorny track;
As well he might. It was the same way back.



WALTER DE LA MARE

ON MISTRESS ALICE OLIVER

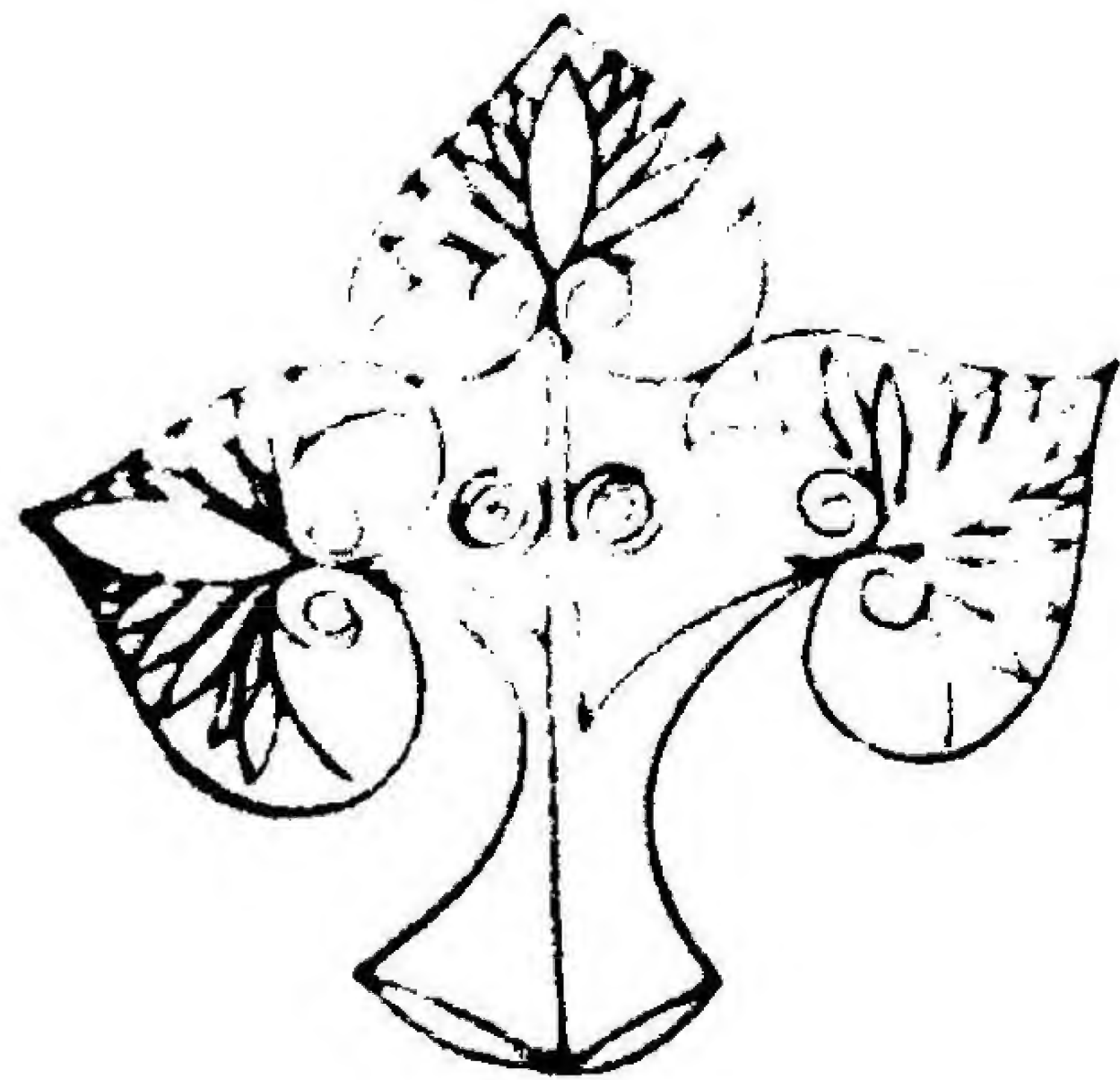
HERE sleeps, past earth's awakening,
A woman, true and pretty;
Who was herself in every thing —
Tender, and grave, and witty.
Her lightest turn of foot, hand, head,
Was way of wind with water;
So with her thoughts and all she said —
It seemed her heart had taught her.
O thou most dear and loving soul,
Think not I shall forget thee;
Nor take amiss what here is writ
For those who never met thee!



JESSE STUART

HIS AUTUMN-COLOURED FACE

HIS autumn-coloured face and eagle eyes
Look on toward more darkened hills of space;
He stands a gaunt man under windy skies.
His sons have fallen to the softer race
Of those who fear to till the rugged lands;
They've taken to clean pages of sweet books
And fear to blister their soft dainty hands —
They fear some day they'll have their father's looks.
He now surveys the winter's waves of weeds
That lie dark-beaten on the rugged slope;
He plans to turn them under for soil needs —
A better corn-crop is his next year's hope.
His far-off eagle eyes survey his dreams
When snows cap high-hills and the world is dead
And ice has spanned the little mountain streams,
His cattle will have corn, his family, bread.



SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER

BENICASIM

HERE for a little we pause.
The air is heavy with sun and salt and colour.
On palm and lemon-tree, on cactus and oleander
a dust of dust and salt and pollen lies.
And the bright villas
sit in a row like perched macaws,
and rigid and immediate yonder
the mountains rise.

And it seems to me we have come
into a bright-painted landscape of Acheron.
For along the strand
in bleached cotton pyjamas, on rope-soled tread,
wander the risen-from-the-dead,
the wounded, the maimed, the halt:
or they lay bare their hazarded flesh to the salt
air, the recaptured sun,
or bathe in the tideless sea, or sit fingering the sand.

But narrow is this place, narrow is this space
of garlanded sun and leisure and colour, of return
to life and release from living. Turn
(turn not!) sight inland:
there, rigid as death and unforgiving, stand
the mountains — and close at hand.

Author's Note.—Benicasim is a Spanish holiday resort, a small fashionable *plage*. The Spanish Government used it as a hospital centre for wounded soldiers.

ROBIN LAMPSON

SOMETIMES I ENVY THE BLIND

SOMETIMES I almost envy the blind their incarceration in the dark.

Sometimes, when the world has saturated the five senses, when the nerves are turgid

With things seen, palled by the palpable, I wish that the body required

And yielded to blindness as to sleep, escaping from the relentless diversions

Of vision, the stifling immersion in light, the flagellations of form,

The persecution of perspective, the overlordship of colour. And then, for an hour

Or a day, immune to the trillions of vibrations that bite into the brain,

Ensconced from the innumerable images that bombard and batter the consciousness,

I should grope inward along my nerves and arteries and discover myself

In an amazing new world more disparate to the trite revelations of light

And the accepted distortions of vision than a dream is to waking reality.

And so I might find, not the face in my mirror, not the man whom men see,

But within my own body a new world all my own, an entirely new being

Most strangely fashioned without form or colour — oh, a physical entity

Real enough: solid, unmelting: vulnerable,

And violable!—but a presence that discloses as
grotesquely out of focus
The nature of a man as observed through the lens
of the air and the graphics of light.

As the dark tube of the microscope reveals to the
exploring eye of the anatomist
Fresh universes within the tissue and blood inside
the immemorial
Centre limit of visibility, so this sleep-like blindness
might shut me off
From the sun and the stars and the obvious vistas
and details of our planet
And plunge me beyond opacity to that realm at the
core of my nerves
And deep into the pith of the brain—till the very
anatomy of consciousness,
The chemistry of feeling and the physics of memory
and thinking, were revealed:
Till my person, seeing inward with something other
than eyes, peered into the torn tissues
Of a pain or the ruddy corpuscles of joy, and
watched the imagination's
Electrolysis of the ions of knowledge deposit the
molecules of ideas.

DONAGH MacDONAGH

THE VETERANS

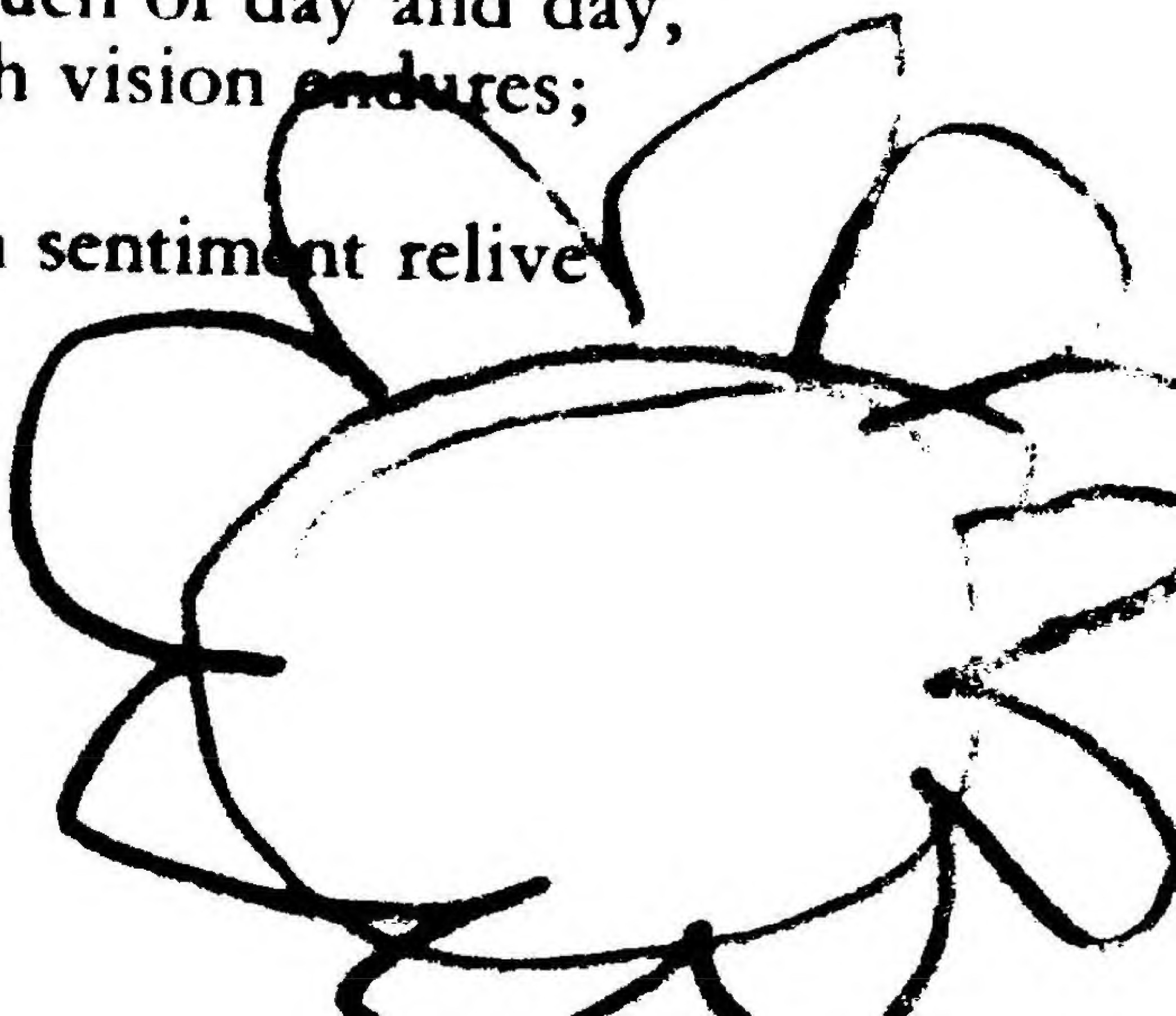
STRICT hair-shirt of circumstance tears the flesh
Of most delicate bones:

Years of counter and office, the warped mesh
Of social living . . . dropping on stones . . .
Wear down all that was rough and worthy
To a common denominator of dull tones.

So these, who in the sixteenth year of the century
Saw their city, a Phoenix upturned,
Settle under the ashes, and bury
Hearts and brains that more frantically burned
Than the town they destroyed, have with the
corrosion of time
Spent more than they earned:

And with their youth has shrunk their singular
mystery
Which for one week set them in the pulse of the age,
Their spring adventure petrified in history,
A line on a page,
Betrayed into the hands of students who question
Oppressed and oppressor's rage.

Only the dead beneath their granite signatures
Are untroubled by the touch of day and day,
Only in them the first rich vision endures;
Those over clay
Retouch in memory, with sentiment relive
April and May.



RALPH FRIEDRICH

WHAT SOLACE?

NOT of the going downward of the root
To taste the food of earth;
Not of the slow ascent of life within the vein,
The blossom's fragile birth,
The still processional of flowers into fruit:
Not of these things is any solace wrought
For Helen who has lain
So long in Grecian earth, for Heloïse,
For white Francesca, over whom the trees
Exult unknowing. When have lovers sought
To woo the laurel, to embrace the palm?
What birch, however delicate and white
Has captured Helen's wonder, though she lay
Beneath it, nourishing
Its beauty with her excellence? What day
Has heard Francesca speaking her delight
With tongues of leaves? What solace have they
now
In feeding root and bough,
Who were their flesh alone, whose flesh alone
decreed
Their glory and their need?



J. REDWOOD ANDERSON

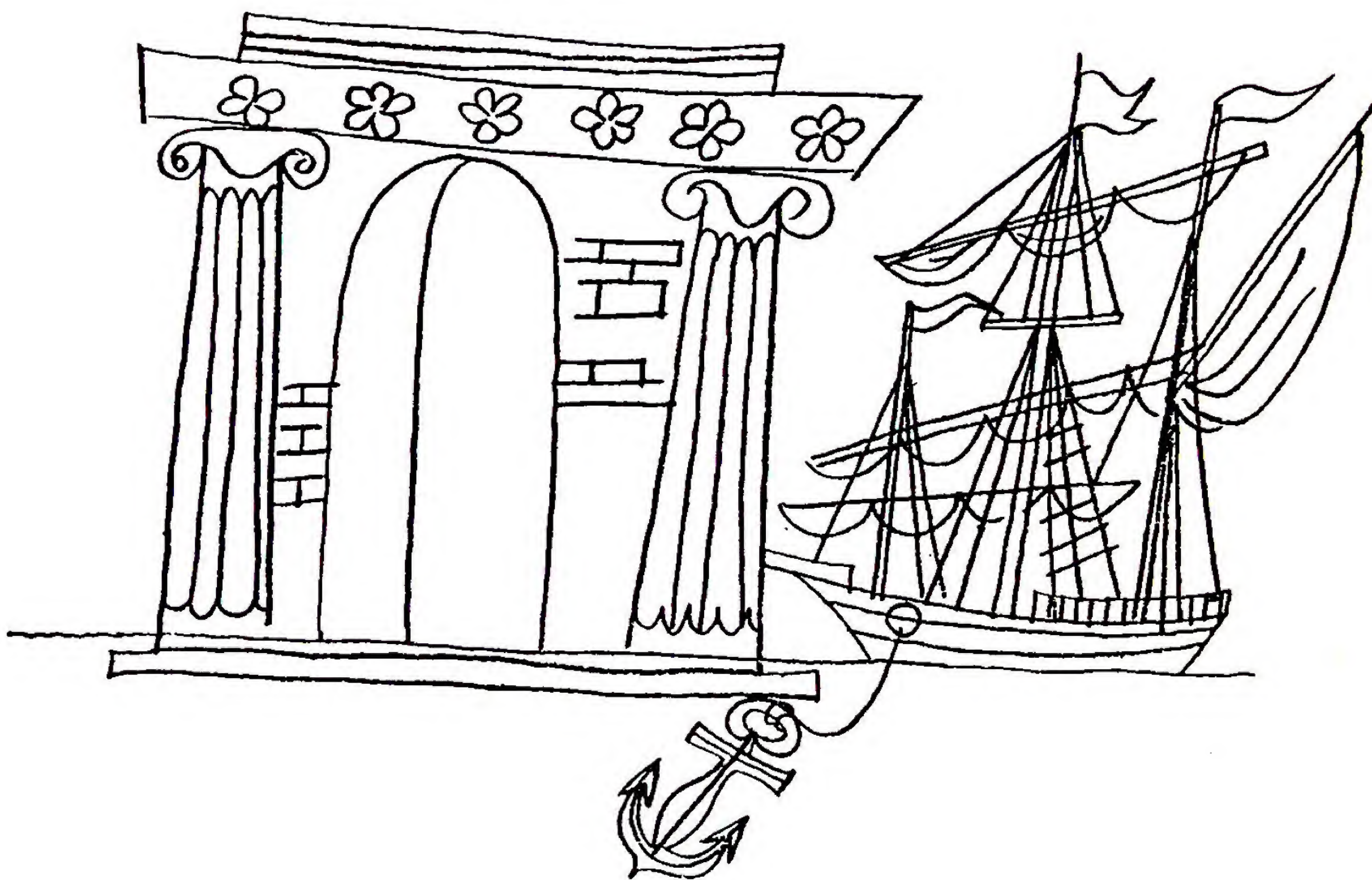
AT KARNAC

STONE lily cool
And beautiful:
Calm lintel cut of old:
Sunset and gold:
Silent around thee lies
Ruin of God and man,
Under deep skies
Burning, blue, African.
How long ago was it
Since thou wert door or gate,
Stone lily desolate?
O, and where went they then
All those forgotten men --
Into what infinite
Temple aloof,
Where now through the broken roof
Only bats flit?

Stone lily cool,
Grown in no lotus-pool:
Chiselled by love of old:
Lonely and beautiful,
Sunset and gold.

Door of what shrine?
Never trod foot of mine
Thy threshold of sands;
But, like some stiff
Impersonal hieroglyph
I lift up my hands:
Lift them saluting thy

Beauty and mystery,
Stone lily cool.
I am but man, and come
Hushed to adore thee;
I am To-day that casts
His shadow before thee;
I am To-day that stands
Wondering, dumb,
Humble beside the Past's
Beautiful
Gateway and tomb.



GEORGE WITTER SHERMAN

MOON OVER SPAIN

MOON I have often seen above the green-spired
fir-trees,
Now like a scythe on the shoulders of our hills,
Again low lying on the still horizon of the Sound,
I hear in your hushed rocking, mournful and pro-
longed,
The malaguena of a Spanish girl lamenting for her
absent
lover. From a white-washed patio her voice now
rises,
Now diminishes in a plaintive dirge: O moonlight,
wasted:
On the fragmentary pillars in the cloistered garden;
on
The shell-uprooted grove and splintered olive-
branches;
On the hard, green olives lying unpicked on the
ground;
O town, deserted – in white ruins; O dead Span-
iards . . .

Nurse,
In white coif, moving above the mounds of billets,
smiling
At the losers, with unspoken thoughts, in long
columns of
Moonlight counting up the lives: the once proud,
laughing
Couples punctual at bull-fights, watching mantle-
angered bulls,
Applauding bowing matadors; on carefree summer
evenings

Promenading, lingering to watch the fountain in
the plaza and
The swans or to drink perfumed wine in pleasure-
bright cafés.
They were your students garnering the mind's
fruits in
Libraries and museums yesterday, lovers of books
and paintings;
And your revellers swarming Gran Via for the
annual fiesta, with
Accordions, guitars and castanets—in pushing
crowds of gay
Sombreros and mantillas rivalling Gran Via's bright
festoons and
Banners, their light-hearted voices singing to hand-
clapping
Recklessly *La Cucaracha* . . . They were your olive-
pickers,
Singing in the olive-groves and in the vineyards
singing, songs
Of Spanish women, songs belonging to the Spanish
earth . . .

Moon

Looking down with grieving rays on all the inter-
rupted dreams,
The many-coloured lives destroyed . . . in flight
from your
Invaded country. . . . In your silence and averted
gaze is told
The sorrow you have seen: the stragglers on the
worn macadam
Highway fleeing the bombarded town; the women
riding burros,

The children listless and bewildered following, the
ambulances
Clanging in the darkness over empty sewer-bursted
streets,
The young child suffering from a new kind of
insomnia,
The sandbag-flanked facades, the sandbag roofs of
shelters,
Improvised of paving-blocks, against the moment's
air-raid
The bits of frescoed plaster, broken glass, the death-
mask
Models: the virgin-youth . . . dead in the after-
noon . . .

To-night,
Low lying on the still horizon of the Sound, you are
A symbol of the bleeding olive-branch and the
friendless refugee.

I hear you sorrowing at Lincoln's tomb in Spring-
field and

At Lenin's tomb in Red Square to-night . . . Reflect
the love

Of these dead heroes for the people; bring a sun-
rise

That is not a signal for attack . . . O moon, slight as
The hope for peace, when shall hand-clasping
lovers, strolling

In the evening, watch you with unfrightened eyes
again?

DOROTHY WELLESLEY

POEM

NATURE, knowing bird and beast,
Guards her greatest like her least;
Makes her insects like twigs seem,
A dragon-fly a dart of sky,
Cat's eye a-gleam a leaf a-beam,
Short bloody hours a pool of flowers,
The moonlight clear a fallow deer
When yonderly at eve he goes
To join the herding of the does.

Thus when a gentleness shall fold
Upon a jungle deep,
Her love, her lordship as of old
Shall melt the wild into her mould
And guard the lion in sleep.

This I know but may not see:
How, safe to quit a pride of lions —
Gold cubs that drowsy gleam
Within the dark of streakèd ferns —
A lioness at twilight turns
To lap like milk the stream.

Yea, but this myself have seen:
A dappled doe in brake,
Sleeping warm around her fawn
Above the lily lake.
This have I watched at opening dawn,
Have watched until she wake.

The when she will, O then she will
Her dapples from her shake,

Her coins of silver round her spill,
Her golden discs drop down until
Her dews of diamond flake;
Till all the ferns her chequer feign,
And all the rough conspires to make
A woodland lovelier for her sake,
To rob the sunlight off the rain
That falls beyond the hill.

Till, coming to the lily lake,
She'll paddle to her belly,
Swimming with fawn at break of dawn
From lily unto lily;
And turning long and rosy tongue
Round lightest leaf and lily bud
Will feed the white child of her blood
On a morning water-lily.

When I am brought to bed of pain
And know my labour's over,
I think I'll lie in peace and dream
Of that great cat who laps the stream
And not of love or lover.

When I give birth to death again,
Or death to birth for ever,
I'll rest, remembering opal rain
That woke the doe in cover;
And see again her coat inlaid
With gold and silver glance the glade,
And lights that ripple over;
And see her swim with spirit eyes
To lilies of her Paradise.

C. F. MACINTYRE

PAVANE OF SEVEN PEACOCKS

SLOW where sunny grasses shine
and flowers updigged from Ophir's mine,
seven peacocks in a line . . .
slow, slow, they pass.

Stately, proud in bronze and green,
lazuli and tourmaline,
opal, iris, smaragdine,
seven peacocks pass.

Not a mort-note do they sing,
move not panache, nor stir wing;
on a solemn journeying
slow, slow, they pass.

Argus-arrogance spread wide,
condescending in their pride
to bow this side and t'other side,
slow, slow, they pass.

Tick of death-watch is their tread.
Gravely, as if mass were read
and the benediction said,
dancing for the golden dead,
seven peacocks pass.

HERBERT PALMER

ROCK PILGRIM

LET the damned ride their earwigs to hell, but let
me not join them.

For why should I covet the tide, or in meanness
purloin them?

They are sick, they have chosen the path of their
apple-green folly.

I will turn to my mountains of light, and my mauve
melancholy.

Let their hands get the primrose — God wreath
me! — of lowland and lagland;

For me the small yellow tormentil of heath-hill and
crag-land.

Man's days are as grass, his thought but as thistle-
seed wind-sown;

I will plod up the pass, and nourish the turf with
my shin-bone.

I should stay for a day, I should seek in high faith
to reclaim them?

But the threadbare-beat straw, and the hole in my
shirt will enflame them.

They are blinder than moles, for they see but the
flies in God's honey.

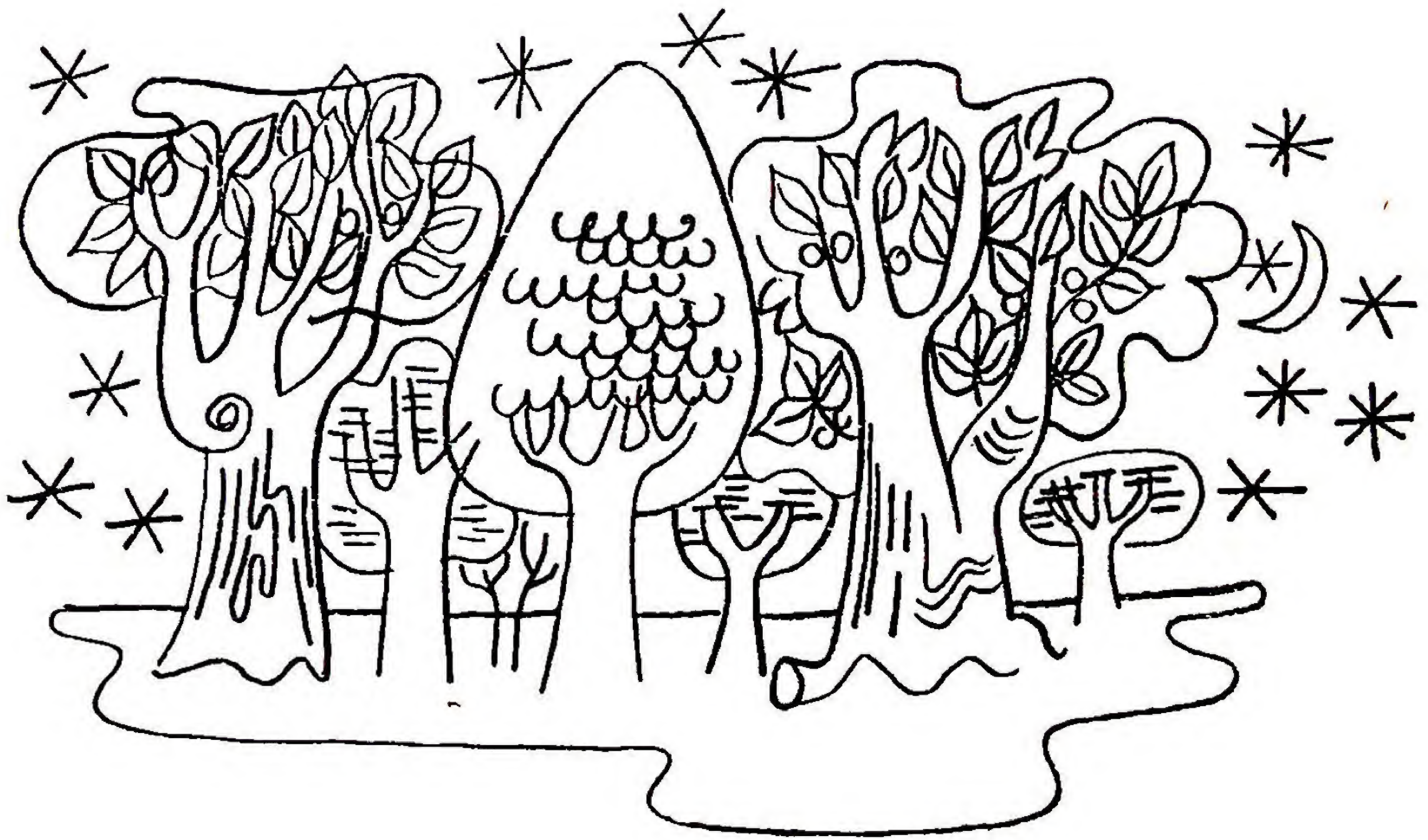
And they eat off their soles; and they kneel to the
Moloch of Money.

They have squeezed my mouth dumb; their clutch
for a year yet may rankle.

I will tie Robin Death to my side, with his claw on
my ankle.

Let them come, stick and drum, and assail me
across the grey boulders,
I will flutter my toes, and rattle the screes on their
shoulders.

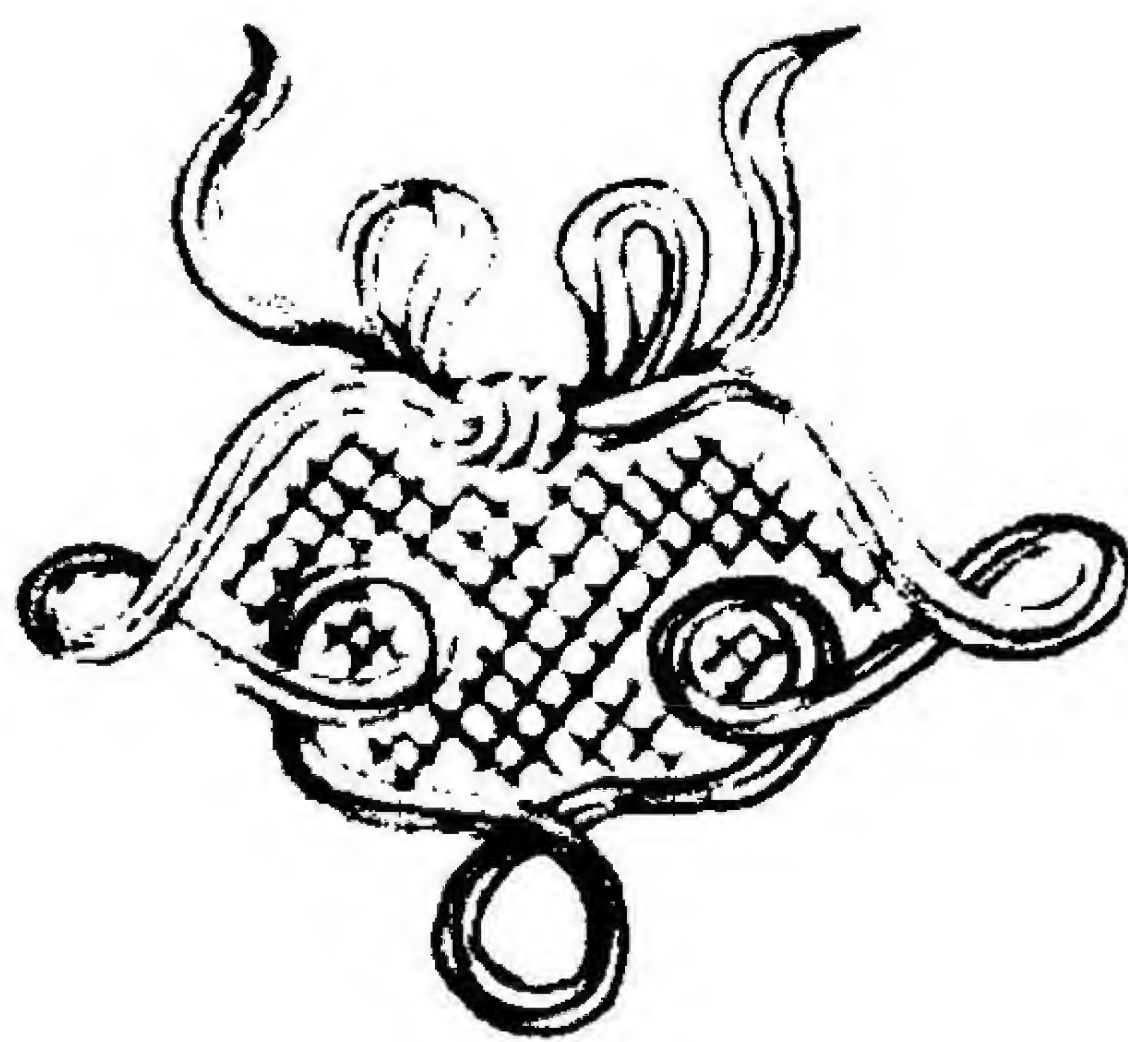
Let the damned get to hell and be quick, while
decision is early.
I will tie a red rose to my stick, and plant my feet
squarely.
My back shall be blind on their spite, and my rump
on their folly;
I will plod up the ridge to the right, past the
crimson-green holly.



C. DAY LEWIS

SONNET

WHEN they have lost the little that they looked
for,
The poor allotment of ease, custom, fame:
When the consuming star their fathers worked for
Has guttered into death, a fatuous flame:
When love's a cripple, faith a bedtime story,
Hope eats her heart out and peace walks on knives,
And suffering men cry an end to this sorry
World of whose children want alone still thrives:
Then shall the mounting stages of oppression
Like mazed and makeshift scaffolding torn down
Reveal his unexampled, best creation --
The shape of man's necessity full grown.
Built from their bone, I see a power-house stand
To warm men's hearts again and light the land.



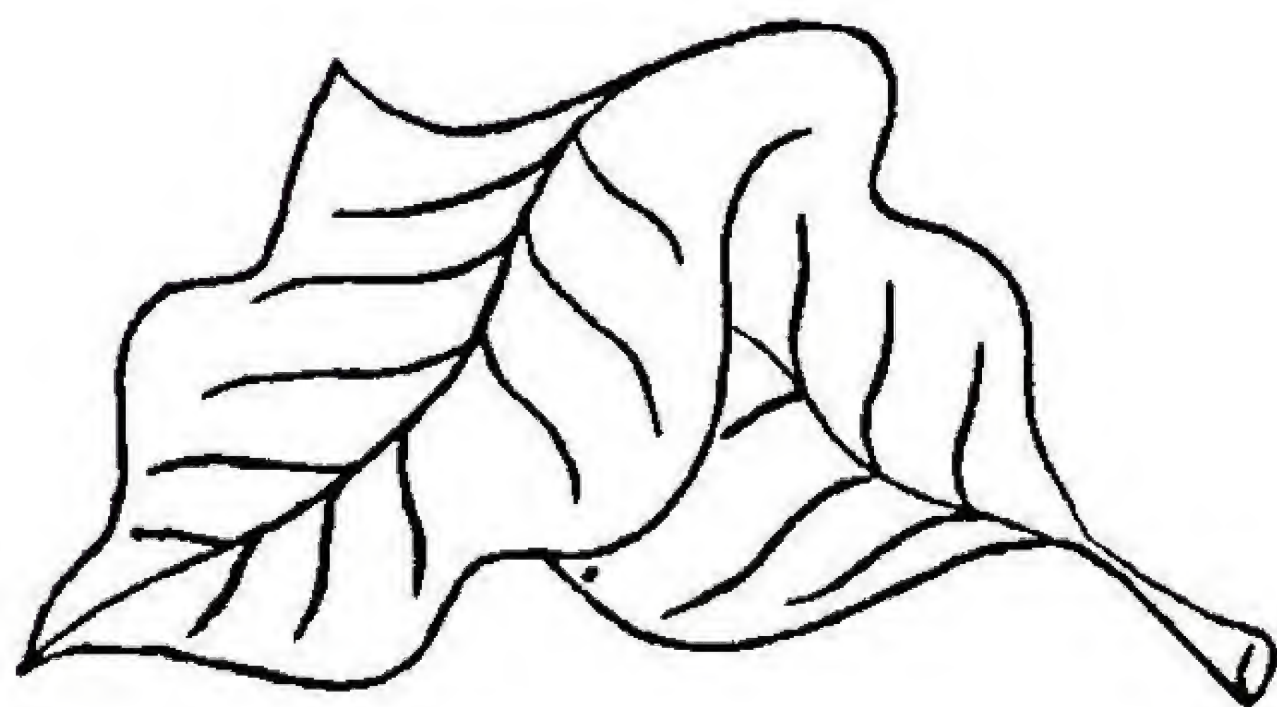
JAMES BRAMWELL

TOMB OF A HERO

THIS horizontal block of stone,
Miraculously not a man,
Is touched with presence nobler than
The hollow scaffolding of bone.

The chiselled tribute of a friend
Who poured the harvest of his art,
The stored-up grain of a full heart
To swell another's plenteous end.

He lies — so would a hero lie —
At rest from being incomplete.
Then thirsting through life's fever heat,
Now bathed in cool eternity.



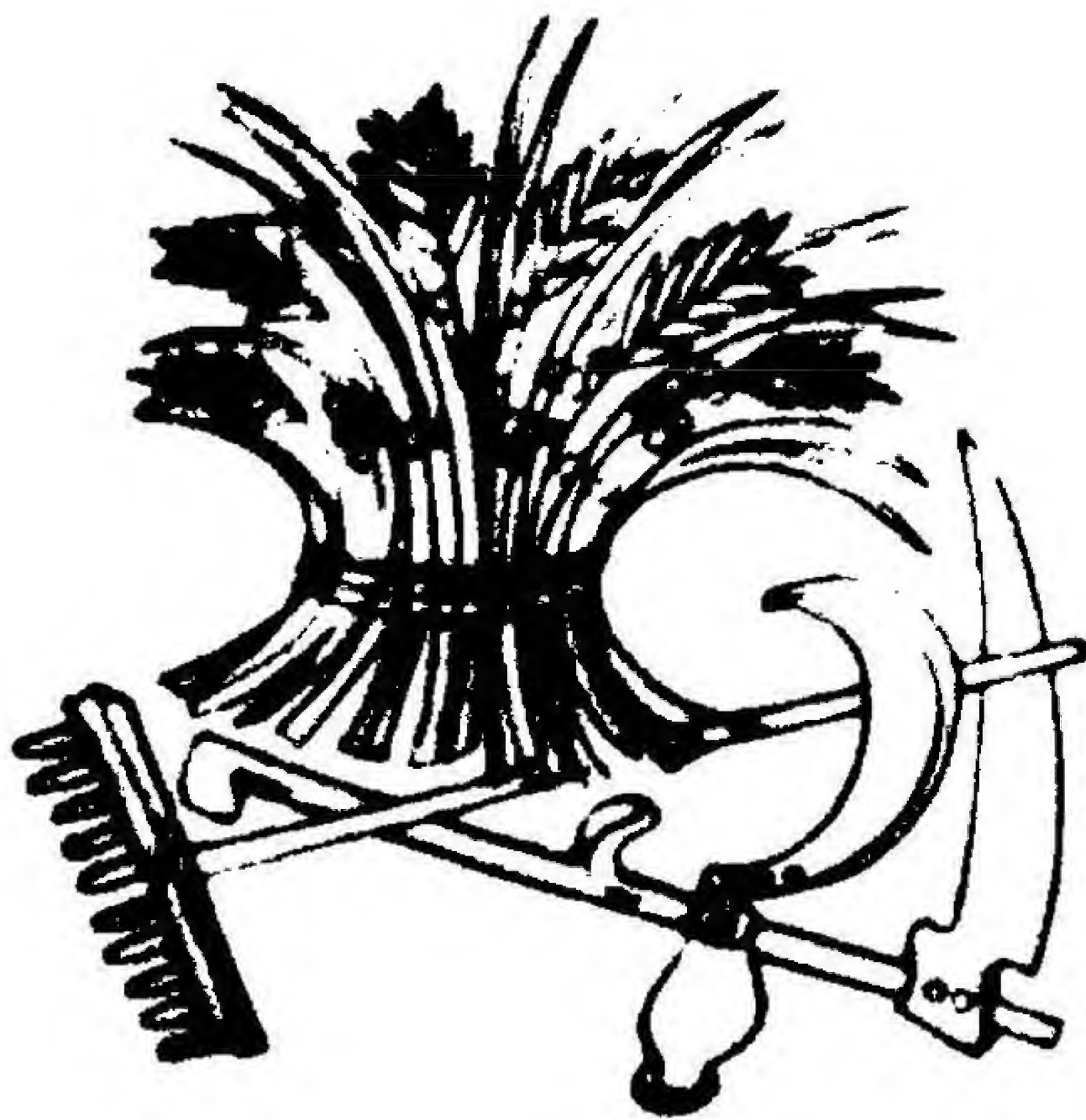
FREDERIC PROKOSCH

SONG

LIVING and dying, hoping and despairing,
We watch the winter tear away the flower:
O do not say too much, be not unkind,
For Europe's grieving in her burning tower.

I still recall the straight and twilit limbs,
The forest pool, the young and echoing power;
Their thighs are locked, their lips are dry of kisses,
And Europe's grieving in her burning tower.

Play softly, black musicians! for the midnight
Flies westward with the dying of the hour,
Cities are flaming, traitors line the shores,
And Europe's trembling in her burning tower.



FREDERIC PROKOSCH

SONG

WHEN dusk caresses all our heads,
When all the curtains touch the sill,
When darkness cloaks the heaving beds
And torches dot the hill,

When ships divide the intriguing night,
When lust new agonies explores,
When sailors watch the flickering light
Along their luckless shores,

When all the impassioned lovers kiss,
When madmen count the stars anew,
When whales in their gigantic bliss
Lie trembling two by two,

When drums cry out and trumpets blow,
And bombers split the town apart,
When exiles march to drown their woe
With bullets in the heart,

Slowly the cruel moon moves higher,
She gains her old ice-pitted throne,
And one whose beauty shone like fire
Lies down to die alone.

D. L. BOWEN

JUMIÈGES

WE took the path across the fields
That slope down to the silver Seine,
The landscape washed by summer rain,
Its distance lost in dewy haze,
Stretch'd far and wide to meet our gaze.

Then rose the towers of Jumièges
That once held sway o'er all this land.
O jewel, destroy'd by vandal hand,
The beauty of thy vast design
Enchants us yet in curve and line!

Forgotten the artists skill'd who plann'd
These soaring arcs and massive piers.
Gone is the pomp of former years!
But graceful still in slow decay
This pious work of olden day.

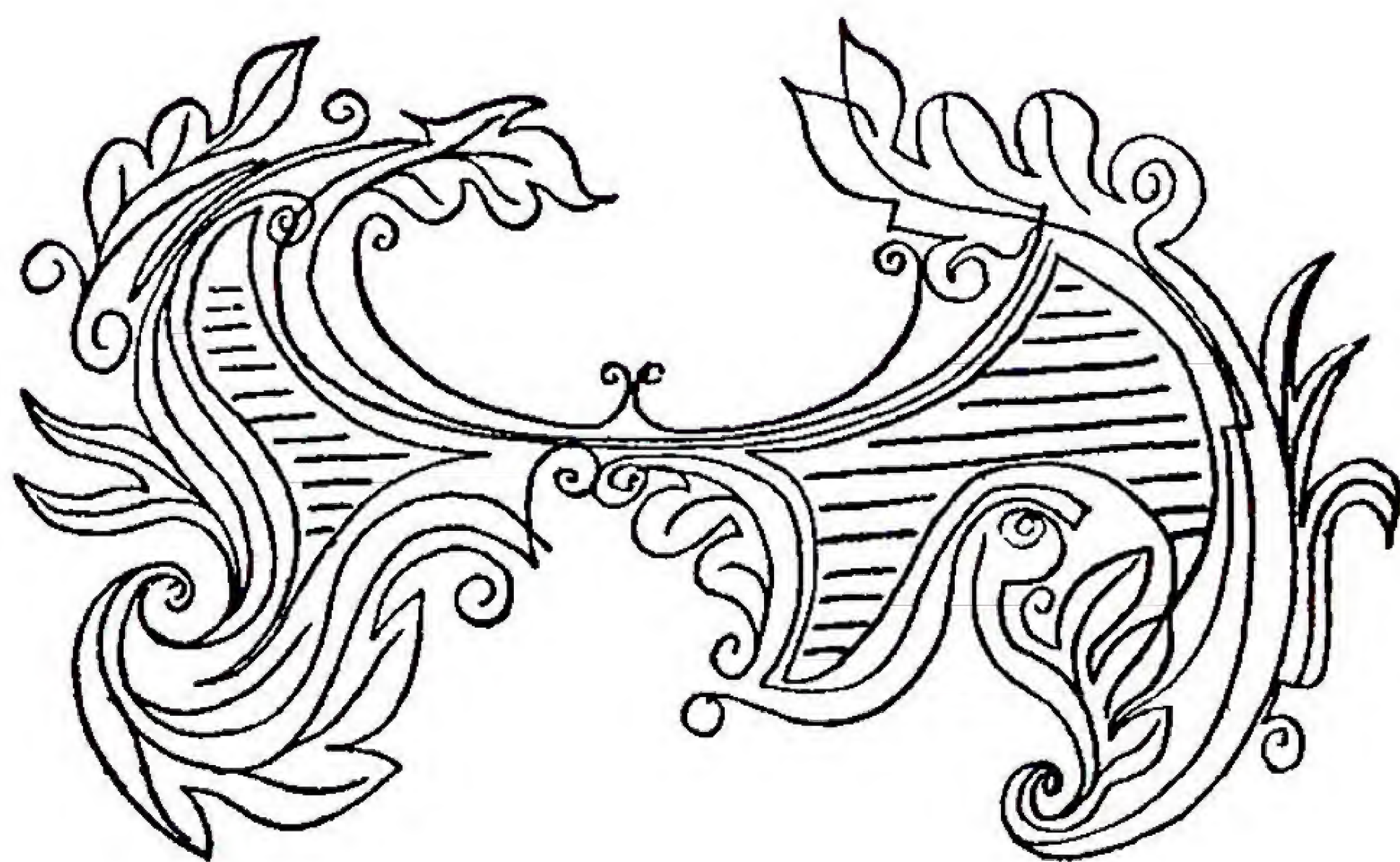
A thousand monks dwelt 'neath thy shade,
A thousand serving men obeyed
Thy Abbots' stern decrees.
And princes, warriors, legates, priests,
Attended at thy stately feasts.

The Confessor here was wont to pray,
Here Harold sware his crown away.
And Lionheart came from Holy Land.
The censers sway'd, the choirs inton'd,
The worldly for their sins aton'd.

All dust — long dust — of no more worth
Than drifting leaf or clod of earth!

Now who will stay and mourn with thee
The passing of thy pageantry?
What shadows haunt thy peace?

Perchance in some soft wintry dusk
Along the whispering wind doth waft
The faint sweet perfume of the musk,
As all embalmed in casket fine,
The monks, with solemn rites divine,
Entomb again the lawless heart
Of Agnes Sorel — well beloved! —
Or, winding through the cloister door,
Twin sons of Cloivs bear once more
Where they shall never part.



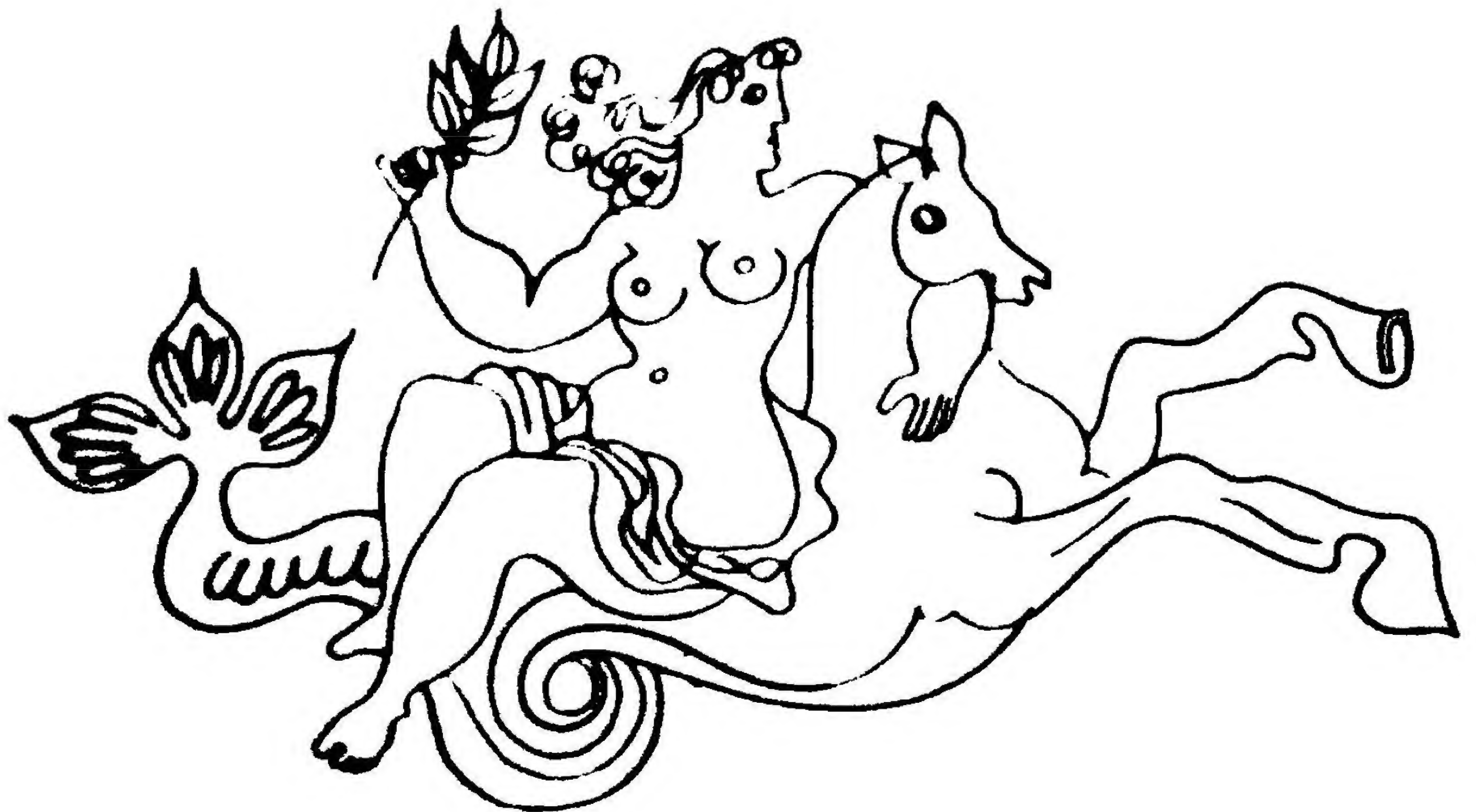
R. N. CURREY

MAY EVENING

ABOUT the Maypole now
Cepheus and Cassiopeia,
The Swan and Dragon, go,
With Great and Little Bear.

Hercules tunes his Lyre;
The choir-boy 'Twins begin
To lead the starry choir;
Booths' bass joins in.

The clustering stars are white
As hedges thick with may;
They'd like a May-queen, but
Shy Virgo runs away.



SIR ARTHUR QUILLER-COUCH

THE LIGHTHOUSE SEAT

A Woman speaks:

HERE from the Lighthouse garden seat
I watch the steamers trailing West;
Almost I hear their engines beat
And take their pulsing to my breast.

So still the evening silken-spread!
So soft the twilit Channel heaves!
As soft the lantern overhead
In skeins of light its warning weaves.

It warned my Sailor off the rocks
To sea, to seas beyond again . . .
To-night the homing birds in flocks
Will slay their life against its pane!

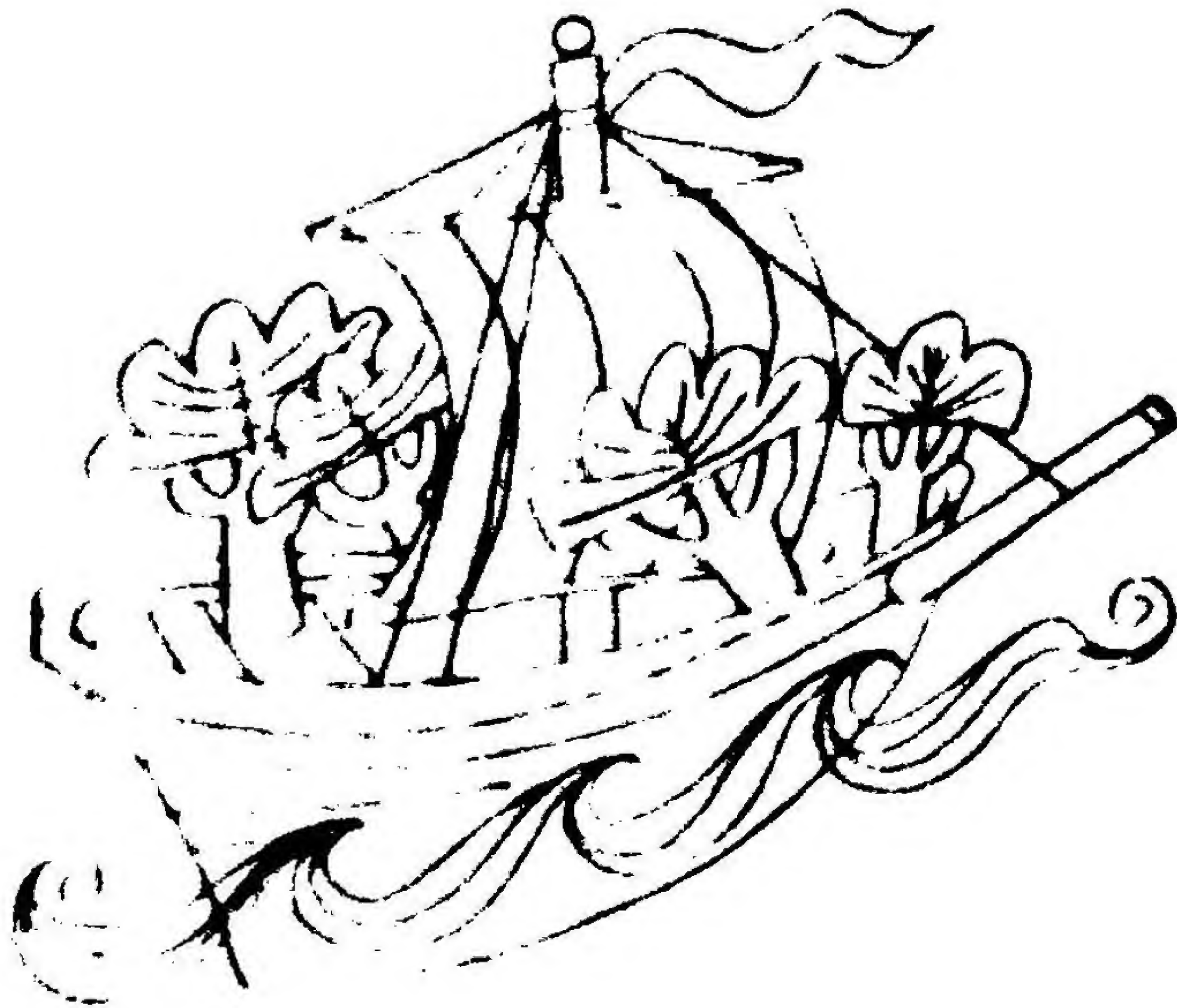
And I — ah, selfish — I shall rise
And lift and drop each broken neck;
As shutters their sea-searching eyes
Closed, closed to take of ship or wreck!

The trawlers off the Eddystone
Have lit their lights and sunk their nets:
Through shells and dead disorder strown
They dredge a floor for my regrets.

They dredge a floor of dream that was
A floor two lovers danced upon:
But never fetch that shoe of glass
My Prince had found and fitted on.

O gentle Jesu, is it Sin
I bring to Thee my fairy-tale?
O Helper once that hushed the din
And still'd off Galilee the gale!

A land-wind faints upon the Sea,
A sob from far behind the hill —
'Gethsemane! Gethsemane!'
'Tis the Sea answers, 'Peace, be still.'



SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER

THE WINTER ROAD

ALL yesterday and all last night it snowed,
and heavy the cloud hangs,
looming with sag of snow that will fall later.
Since morning the gangs
have laboured to clear a single track on the road,
where a man comes by wheeling a perambulator.

Ramshackle and ungainly it jolts and careens
over the frozen slush.
Steadying himself he tightens his grip on the handle
as though he must hush
at all costs the babe asleep there, and leans
a doting gaze over his darling a-dandle.

But the hood flapped back by the wind shows a
billycan,
old newspapers tied with twine,
foot-rags, and a mug, and some scraps of fuel.
Without a sign
of question the roadmen watch as he trundles on
his little ark, his life's holding, his heart's jewel.

DONALD PARSON

AT KEATS'S GRAVE

(To W. L. P.)

IF I could write one sonnet ere I die
On some large theme of love or life or death,
Sung to one note, as if a single breath
Had flung a fanfare to the curtained sky;
Where every rhyme should meet its fellow-rhyme
Like lovers' lips, and every phrase be fair,
And every thought, new-minted, proudly wear
The robe of beauty, yet the stamp of time:
Then might I lie, like you, almost content,
Blind to the moon, deaf to the alien tongue,
And make this sanctuary of the birds
My home, under a foreign firmament,
Until some day a stranger, blond and young,
Should whisper to my dust dear Saxon words.



J. C. HALL

IF TO-DAY I HAD COME TO A DEAD-END

IF to-day I had come to a dead-end,
Foundered on the rocks of death,
Reached the solution of this If;

If suddenly I had lurched in the morn-air,
Dropped like the shot bird down chasms
Of nude-nervous space, through prisms

Of colour dwindling to rock-bottom;
If the prometheus was struck
Suddenly cold, like the cold rock:

Would it have been so very pitiful?
Would they have said 'He was too young
To die' in their voices that cling

Round one like the well-knitted shawl of
grief?

Such enigmas play around me,
Poor assessor of futility.

JOHN GAUSWORTH

NAIADS

WHO knows what lovely noise they made,
What light explosions of gold laughter?
No one alive saw them, or heard
Their voice, nor shall one after.

I have envisioned them in dreams
By the blue marge and by the green
Zacynthus of the uncounted leaves —
And cannot say what I have seen.



G. D. MARTINEAU

TO THE SHADE OF WILLIAM CLARKE
(*On the First Cricket Test at Trent Bridge,
Nottingham*)

LOOK how they muster. William, can you see?
Here's where you fared along o' Pilch and
Mynn.

Could you have dreamed that such as this would be
When first you met with Mary at the inn?

Here is all England, gathered for the bout,
All England watching, while All England plays:
Your own team, William—could you bowl them
out

As promptly as you did in those old days?

The same green meads, yet somehow not the same,
Stretch out, inviting, for the hosts engaged.
A smoother carpet bears the modern game,
And maybe you would find it oddly waged.

Do you smile grimly, William, from the shades
To mark the filing throng, their earnest mien,
The buffets hard dispensing lemonades,
And think of beer and benches on the green?

'Tis all changed, William—matches four days long.
Still there are sights and sounds to bridge the
years,

The deep ring thrilling to the same old song,
The stir, the roar, the burst of rolling cheers.

AGNES GROZIER HERBERTSON

THE STRANGER

FROM out the sea they drew him. There
He lay upon the shining sand,
Water and weed in his bright hair,
A long green tangle in his hand;
As heedless as the opening day,
As the lone rock, as the sea spray.

From what glad enterprise he came,
From what high test of speed or power,
None knew; nor any knew his name;
The sea had borne him like a flower.
Single he was as the far sky,
As the long wash, as the wind's cry.

Yet there was sound of grieving. . . . Strong
And young he was, and proud of limb;
And none could bear to watch him long.
They drew an old sail over him.

Deep in his silences lay he:
Like the fall'n wind, like the stilled sea.

STANTON A. COBLENTZ

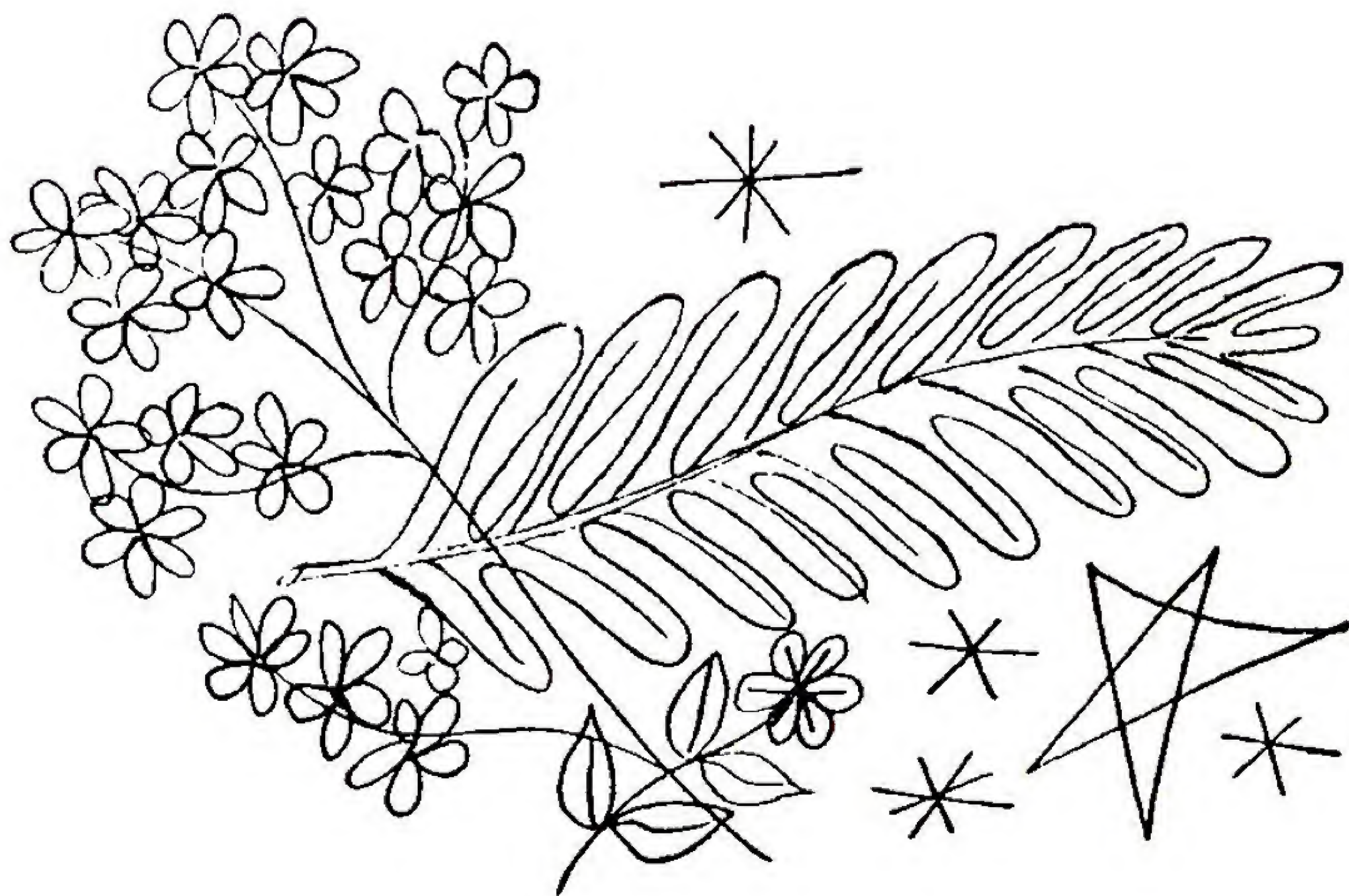
CROWS

BLACK flapping outlaws of the fields and hills,
With voices raucous as a rusty pipe,
And thievery dripping shameless from your bills
When skies are warm and summer grain is ripe!

I hear you cawing at the dawn's first gray,
In congregations on some high dead limb;
I watch your heavy flight at close of day,
With leathery beats when dusk is shadow-dim.

I note your wrangling; see your hard bright eyes
That glitter with a self-important mien;
Catch your shrill croaks of fury and surprise,
And know that life for you is glad and keen.

Strange! though like inky demons you may dart,
Somehow you bring me thought of one on earth,
Who shares your eager, grasping, quarrelling heart,
Yet flocks in cities, without half your mirth!



L. AARONSON

THE WILDERNESS

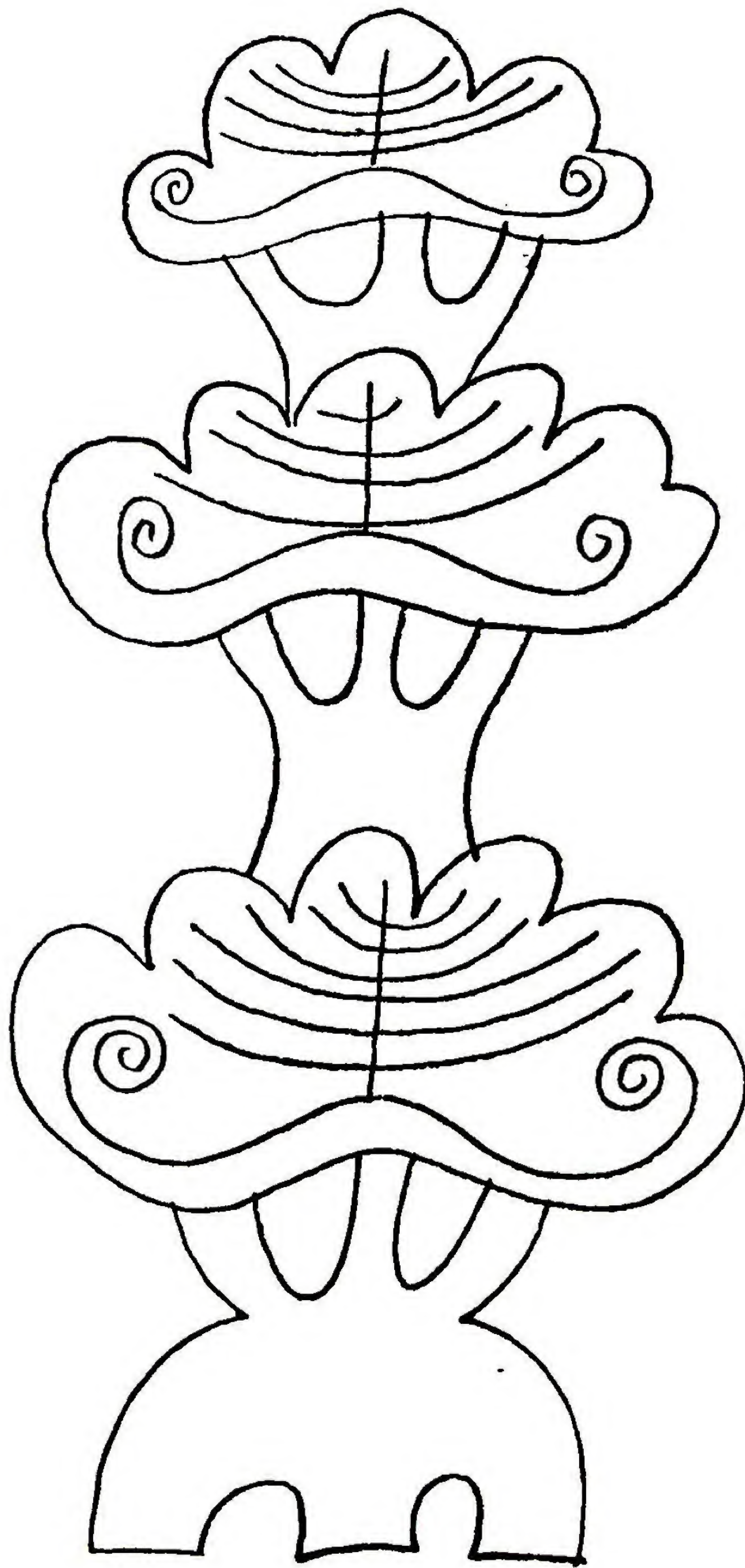
FOR forty years they wandered and believed,
My people! Wandered and were not deceived;
But I in forty days of wilderness
Forget my God and buckle under Time.
Is then the spirit weaker than the flesh
Which weathers winter and oblivion
Whispered from every bare and spare drowsed
tree?

Has faith no faculty except received
With genial light and comfort? Am I less
Than my own fathers were, the shaggy crowd,
Chanting with Moses when the storms unleash?
The iron spirit rusts. The iron age
Deafens with piston-speed the listening heart.
Mortality is callipered, and the rage
Of true intangibles divides in me
Into the little rages for the new.

No more, no more I seek the destined home
But make the bread of all the future's gauge,
And highest destiny earth's honeycomb.
I who have held the trust of love and truth
Am of all sinners miserably least
Who can, when earth quakes under cruel youth,
Cry that apocalypse as God's best yeast.

There is the bread of pain which all men share
With Him who was in Heaven God's first heir.
I cry the news no more, accept the hate,
The words of self-destruction and the lust
Which turn the thunder into cannon-talk.
I in all false assembly and debate
For shame withhold the word I held in trust.

I let the iron answer, and I baulk
The old simplicity that rises up
To hand about the ancient loving-cup.
Dear God, once more let Moses lead me out
Till from the hills I see Jerusalem
And call Your name and let the echoing shout
Recall within men's hearts the truth in them.

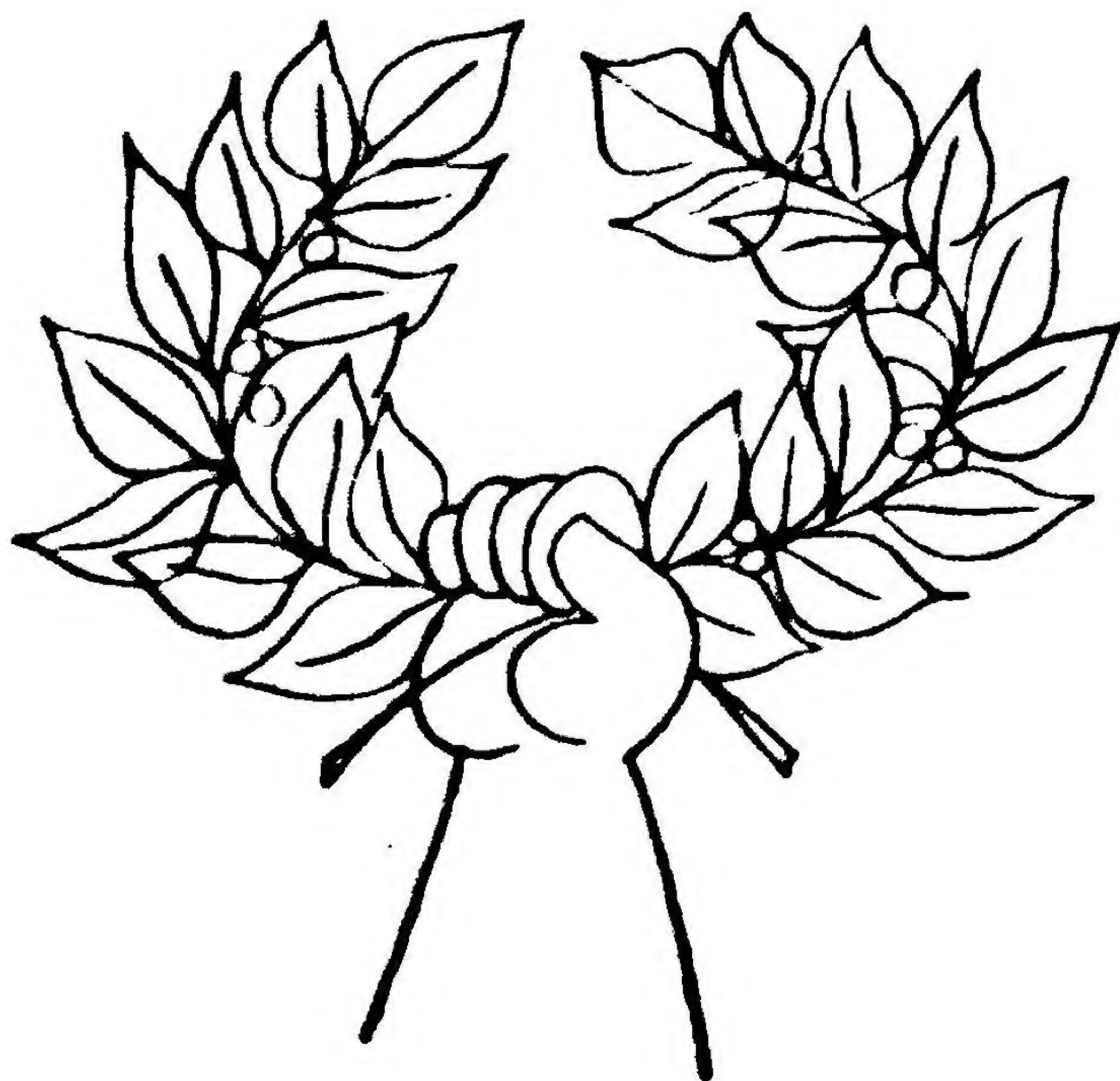


ANDERSON M. SCRUGGS

ETERNAL ARMAGEDDON

THERE is no strife like that which ebbs and flows
Within the dark horizon of the brain,
Where heart and mind eternally are foes,
 Battling to win what none shall ever gain,
Where tattered, starved battalions of the flesh
For ever storm the citadel of reason,
Where stolid fact and fantasy enmesh
 The soul in tumult season after season.

There is no respite though the day surrender
 Its last beleaguered outpost to the stars;
Even in sleep aggressor and defender
 Wage in the dream their old, eternal wars.
Never shall there be any end to this
 Till Death rides down with his dark armistice.



MAURICE B. RECKITT

BALLADE OF MISANTHROPY

ANOTHER thousand bombed to death in Spain —
Vienna must be purged of every Jew —
A 'wrecking' trial is coming on again
(Stalin must do his spot of purging too).
No matter what the news, it's never new;
Cruelty, greed, adultery, despair —
And most of it is very likely true.
Humanity is very hard to bear.

I fear I have a misanthropic strain,
The antics of the sexes make me blue.
Go-getter he, gold-digger she — these twain
Are bound to make the mess of life they do.
Why does she pluck the eyebrow nature grew,
Then paint another when it isn't there?
I do not understand the thing, do you?
Humanity is very hard to bear.

I love the larger mammals, in the main.
The bear has poise; there's litheness in the gnu.
The elephant is gracious and urbane;
I like the élan of the kangaroo.
While as for cats — what more entrancing view,
Than Polydore asleep upon my chair?
Then why is it — I'm asking for a clue —
Humanity's so very hard to bear?

Envoi.

Prince, will you take me to your private Zoo?
I understand you have a tiger there
That's better bred than any in *Who's Who*.
Humanity is very hard to bear.

ALFRED NOYES

IRENE VANBRUGH

(1888-1938)

FIFTY years back -- or was it yesterday? —
In *As You Like It*, London saw her play
A shepherdess, named Phœbe . . .

The play nears
Its end before that shepherdess appears.
The player is too young for fame; and yet
At her first words, her listeners forget
The make-believe, the trappings and the stage.
Green boughs are round them, and the golden age.

Fifty years back in Arden . . . though her name
Was printed small, through that proud wood she
came;

And, all at once, old London was aware
That Shakespeare's very shepherdess was there —
The bird-like eyes, the living truth and grace,
The spirit of youth and wonder in her face —
Speaking, as April might, or April's birds,
The Master's echo of Kit Marlowe's words:
*Dead shepherd, now I find thy saw of might
Who ever loved that loved not at first sight?*

Fifty years back -- she made the woodland shine
Like youth and morning with that echoed line,
Gave all the poet's life to her small part,
And wrote her name on London's mighty heart.
Irene Vanbrugh — at that name, there rise
In all our hearts to-day, what memories,
What legends of a London, long ago,
When London, sirs, *was* London, as ye know!

Great days, when Alexander reigned in power,
And Ernest was important — for an hour!
But she — our living best, through all those years
Has moved old London's heart to smiles and tears,
And still — with timeless art that grows not old,
Brings back *our* youth, *our* London's age of gold,
When she was Rose Trelawny, or Letty Shell,
Rosamund in *The Liars*, or Miss Nell
Of New Orleans; or when she swept the stage
As Lady Teazle, or as Mistress Page;
Swayed us with Barrie's magic; or, once more,
Moved to her darker throne at Elsinore.

Whether she played the subtlest of her sex,
Or talked at midnight to *The Gay Lord Quex*,
She made them live, whatever part she took, —
Clara in *Money*, Kate in *The Twelve Pound Look*,
Belinda, Viceroy Sarah, or Amy Grey,
Flashing from gay to grave, and grave to gay,
And carrying London with her all the way.

Fifty years back? In Arden? No; that glade
Is of the timeless world where nought can fade, —
The world of beauty. Spirits that live there
May play at age, and still be young and fair.
From age to youth, the parts again shall change.
Where'er it will, the quickening soul may range.
So — when that curtain rises — you shall see
Not only scenes that shine in memory,
Forty years back . . . but still beneath her sway,
Twenty years back, and *ten*, and *yesterday*! . . .
Yesterday? Here and now, this very night,
London shall still increase its old delight
With great new memories, ere that curtain fall,
And find the living present best of all!

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